Christopher Stead

Doctrine and Philosophy in Early Christianity

Arius, Athanasius, Augustine

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CONTENTS

Introduction ix–xviii

I Greek Influence on Christian Thought 175–185
Early Christianity Origins and Evolution to AD 600 Festschrift in Honour of W.H C Frend, ed I Hazlett London 1991

II The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God by Early Christian Theologians: W. Pannenberg's Thesis Reconsidered 1–18
English Translation of Die Aufnahme des philosophischen Gottesbegriffs W. Pannenberg's These neu bedacht', Theologische Rundschau Tubingen, 1986

III Marcel Richard on Malchion and Paul of Samosata 140–150
Logos Festschrift in Honour of Luise Abramowski ed H C Brennecke et al Berlin, 1993

IV Arius in Modern Research 24–36
Iournal of Theological Studies 45 pt 1 Oxford, 1994

V Was Arius a Neoplatonist? 39–52
Studia Patristica 32 Leuven 1997

VI Arius on God's 'Many Words' 153–157
Journal of Theological Studies 36 Oxford, 1985

VII The Word 'From Nothing' 671–684
Journal of Theological Studies 49, pt 2 Oxford 1998

VIII The Arian Controversy: A New Perspective 51–59
EPMHNEYMATA (Ἑρμηνεύματα) Festschrift in Honour of Hadwig Hörner, ed H Eisenberger Heidelberg 1990

IX Knowledge of God in Eusebius and Athanasius 229–242
The Knowledge of God in the Greco-Roman World, ed J Mansfeld et al Leiden, 1989

X Athanasius' Earliest Written Work 76–91
Journal of Theological Studies 39, pt 1 Oxford 1988

XI Athanasius als Exeget 174–184
Christliche Exegese zwischen Nicaea und Chalcedon ed J van Oort and U Wickert Kampen Neth 1992

XII The Scriptures and the Soul of Christ in Athanasius 233–250
Vigiliae Christianae 36 Leiden, 1982

XIII St Athanasius on the Psalms 65–78
Vigiliae Christianae 39 Leiden 1985

XIV Why Not Three Gods? The Logic of Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Doctrine 149–163
Studien zu Gregor von Nyssa und der christlichen Spätantike, ed H R Drobner and C Klock (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae 12) Leiden 1990

XV Augustine's Philosophy of Being 71–84
The Philosophy of Christianity, ed G Vesey Cambridge 1989

XVI The Intelligible World in Platonic Tradition, Marius Victorinus and Augustine 1–14
First Publication

XVII Augustine's Universe 1–13
First Publication

XVIII Augustine's *De Magistro*: A Philosopher's View 63–73
Signum Pietatis Festchrist in Honour of Cornelius Petrus Mayer, ed A Zumkeller. Würzburg, 1989

Augustine's *De Magistro*: An Addendum 1–2

XIX Augustine, the *Meno* and the Subconscious Mind 339–345
Die Weltlichkeit des Glaubens in der Alten Kirche Festschrift in Honour of Ulrich Wickert, ed D Wyrva et al Berlin, 1997

XX Logic and the Application of Names to God 303–320
El 'Contra Eunomium I en la produccion literaria de Gregorio de Nisa, ed L F Mateo-Seco and J L Bastero Pamplona, 1988

XXI Divine Simplicity as a Problem for Orthodoxy 255–269
The Making of Orthodoxy. Essays in Honour of Henry Chadwick ed R Williams Cambridge 1989

Index 1–7

This volume contains xviii + 294 pages

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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Each article has been given a Roman number in order of appearance, as listed in the Contents above This number is repeated on each page and is quoted in the index entries

INTRODUCTION

I have collected in this volume the most important of the papers that I published in 1985–1997, as a sequel to my *Doctrine and Illusion in the Christian Fathers* (Aldershot, Variorum, 1985). Most of them deal with three notable theologians of the 4th–5th century, as my title suggests But I start with the beginnings of Christian doctrine, and thereafter follow a chronological order.

The fust two pieces turn on the influence of Greek philosophy on early Christian doctrine. To begin with, I have deliberately chosen a very simple introductory essay; well-informed readers will find nothing new, except perhaps the choice of philosophers who need to be considered. The discussion that follows is inevitably much more complex, as it involves the Greek philosophers' views of the nature of God, and is prompted by the work of the well-known dogmatic theologian Wolfhart Pannenberg, set fotth in an essay which has been reproduced in English in his *Basic Questions in Theology*. This has been quoted with evident approval by English writers, and may well be still influential. I have examined it very closely, as Pannenberg's reputation demands, and have concluded with reluctance that, although he makes some good points, his conclusions as to the philosophers' views of God's nature and their influence, are incoherent, if not self-contradictory The critical tone of my paper cannot be mistaken; but no answer has reached me, either (so far as I am aware) in print or by private communication; for that matter, Pannenberg's essay itself remained virtually unchallenged, apart from the indignant ('*temperamentvoll*') reply by Professor de Vogel and an excellent short summary by Professor Ritter The paper is complex, but ends with a summary which states my own conclusions in simple terms.

The third essay considers the testimony concerning Paul of Samosata, Bishop of Antioch, 260–268. Paul is conventionally written off as a heretic, but on two quite different grounds: first, that he was an Adoptionist, holding that Jesus Christ was a mere man, inspired like other good men by the Holy Spirit (according to Eusebius *H.E.* 7 29, 'he strutted about in the abominable heresy of Attemas'); alternatively, that he was a Sabellian, denying that God is a real Trinity of Persons. What is certain is that he was an able disputant, and was only dislodged from his see by a powerful group of Alexandrian-type theologians, who had to engage a professional rhetorician named Malchion to put their case. They gained the upper hand; Paul was condemned and discredited; and the

Paulianists, his professed followers, had very little influence.

But how much do we really know of his teaching? Eusebius does not report it in detail, though he expatiates on Paul's alleged misconduct. But he does tell us that Paul's debate with Malchion was taken down by stenographers, in which case it may have been accessible in Eusebius' time. However, an essay by the redoubtable Marcel Richard has argued that 'stenographers' is a mistranslation; they were in fact simply 'spies', who gave their own version of his teaching.

I give evidence to show that Richard himself has mistranslated the critical term, and that Eusebius really did report that stenographers were present. In that case we can make a slightly more confident approach to the 'fragments' of Paul, especially those drawn from the debate with Malchion, in which he seems to speak for himself. The whole material has been carefully edited by G. Bardy, and again by Henri de Riedmatten, who argues for its substantial authenticity.

I think myself that Paul was a much more interesting theologian than his detractors allege. This is too complex a question to be considered in detail here; but it does involve a problem of the highest theological importance, namely the divinity of our Lord, and the question whether his real human sufferings impair, or contrariwise reveal, that divinity. Moreover, the victory of the Alexandrian party had momentous consequences for the shaping of Christian doctrine. They were concerned above all things to uphold the Johannine avowal that '*the Word* became flesh'; the complementary truth that 'God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law' was to them of less account. They were thus inclined to argue that the acknowledged sufferings of Christ were something external to his real nature; Jesus had no natural human soul; its place was taken by the indwelling Word; in Athanasius' phrasing, his sufferings impinged only on his flesh. The absence of a human soul was clearly stated by Apollinaris, and officially condemned; but in Cyril of Alexandria and others this human soul was given little more than formal recognition; Christ had one nature only, and that was divine. Thus the Monophysites obtained a commanding position in the Eastern church; the Chalcedonian doctrine of Christ as 'true God and true man', of two natures united in this single individual ('hypostasis'), was either rejected or so much diluted in the interests of concord that its significance was lost. The Monophysites drew away some of the best elements in the Eastern church, and the schism still continues in being.

In the following pages you will find five essays devoted to Arius, five to Athanasius, and five to Augustine. This neat and symmetrical arrangement is in fact misleading, since the fortunes of Arius and of Athanasius are closely connected. Right down to *c.* 1950 it was customary to treat Athanasius as a fully trustworhy source for the period from 318 to 373, when he died aged about 75 years. Modern scholarship has brought about a reassessment of his conduct, his controversial politics and even of his theology; while his conception of Arius, and of the theologians whom he scornfully nick-named 'Ariomaniacs' is now

seen to be prejudiced and misconceived.

Even Athanasius' defenders have accepted his 'forceful' treatment of the opposing party. Many modern scholars go much further. Richard Hanson, in a lively survey of fourth-century theology ('The attainment of orthodoxy in the Fourth Century AD', in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Festschrift in Honour of Henry Chadwick*, ed. Rowan Williams) refers to his 'unscrupulous violence', highlighted by two papyrus letters discovered in the 1920s (ibid., p. 151). And the so-called 'Ariomaniacs' were in fact a diffuse collection of theologians who distrusted the Nicene term 'consubstantial', *homoousios*, as suggesting an identity of the Father and the Son, and who expressly stated that they were not followers of Arius. Further, my own studies have shown that even where Athanasius' theology was sound – and it very often is so – the arguments he used against these opponents often rely upon ambiguous phrases and faulty inference; this will be shown in papers VI and VII of this collection. Perhaps his principal weakness as a theologian was to share the perspective of the 'Alexandrians' already mentioned; his occasional references to Christ's human soul are quite insufficient to make his position clear. My papers XII and XIII have some bearing on this subject. 'Insufficient' because his attribution of the Lord's sufferings to his 'flesh', understood in a broad sense, ignores the agony of mind which the Gospels attest, and makes him far too much like a Stoic sage. And in any case the two passages which have been quoted in his favour only hint indirectly at a soul; while Athanasius' alleged authorship of the *Contra Apollinarem* has been disproved by my own review of George Dragas's edition (*Journal of Theological Studies* 39 [1988], 250–53). Needless to say, much of Athanasius' teaching is very good indeed; his little work on the Incarnation has always been acclaimed as a masterpiece.

The next two pieces, nos. IV and V, deal with Arius' theology, but in very different idioms. No. IV is a fairly straightforward examination of Arius' teaching as it appears to me; it was written to be delivered at Mainz, at Gerhard May's kind suggestion, and was repeated by invitation at Heidelberg and Marburg. No. V is a detailed critique of the remarkable theory proposed, with all due caution, by Dr Rowan Williams, to the effect that Arius was an up-to-the minute student of the Neoplatonists, including even his near-contemporary Iamblichus, as well as Porphyry. Despite my admiration for Dr Williams' wide-ranging scholarly and devotional works, I have to say that the evidence he propounds for this particular view is wholly inadequate.

The next two essays consider two Arian pronouncements which were held up for ridicule by 'orthodox' theologians, following Athanasius. I have argued that both the phrases attributed to Arius are patient of a number of different interpretations; and there is no evidence at all that Arius understood them in the objectionable sense, or senses, fathered upon them by his critics. The first is a fairly simple point; the Bible represents God as speaking to his people on many different occasions, and of course using different phrases as the occasion

demands There is no evidence that Arius himself thought that the divine Word was comparable to these occasional pronouncements; on the contrary, though he states that the Word was created, in accordance with Proverbs 8:22 LXX, he clearly regarded him as an 'only-begotten Son', to be described in Isaiah's phrase as 'mighty God', though personally distinct from 'the God' and Father of all, as well as from all other creatures and words

The next piece, no VII, is longer and more substantial The phrase that the Word is 'from nothing' is capable of various meanings; several of these were used *in malam partem* by critics intent upon showing that Arius' teaching was blasphemous or absurd In my opinion, by far the most likely meaning of the phrase as used by Arius conveyed the doctrine that the Word, being in a carefully guarded sense 'a creature', was not created by God's imposition of order on a pre-existing unformed matter, as several Greek philosophers had held; rather, in the beginning, before time began, only God the Father existed This doctrine resembles that taught by Irenaeus, and by Tertullian (in the beginning God was *Deus*, but was not *Dominus*, since there was nothing for him to dominate) By Arius' time it had become accepted doctrine that God created *ex nihilo* And the doctrine that the Son was coeternal with Him, though widely accepted, had not yet become a requirement for orthodox belief. Even the Nicene Creed of 381, which we commonly use today, contents itself with the phrase 'begotten of his Father before all worlds'; not, of course, the rendering 'eternally begotten of the Father', which has been ignorantly intruded into the Creed by the authors of the Anglican *Alternative Service Book*

There is thus a good deal of evidence that Arius' teaching has been maliciously caricatured by his opponents, though I do not of course think it defensible *in toto*; also that his treatment, and that of his followers by Athanasius and his adherents, was harsh and unchristian I sought to express this opinion in simple and dramatic terms by a piece of pure invention; though I could also say that it has precedents in the practice of ancient historians, who even when they knew what was actually said on a given occasion were often prepared to substitute a composition of their own, reflecting their own awareness of the speaker's character and circumstances My little piece does not even profess to report what Arius, or an Arian, said on any particular occasion; but I think I have expressed his opinions as discovered from a careful study of what was said of him, especially by Athanasius in his *De Synodis*; and have given full references to the relevant passages.

This piece was delivered at a session of the Patristic Seminar at Cambridge, and was well received; though my intention of reading it with a perfectly dead-pan expression was not sufficiently well maintained to take in the more alert of my hearers, whose suspicions in any case should have been aroused by my failure to indicate the provenance of the supposed Arian document I had hoped the proverb *dulce est desipere in loco* would suffice to teveal my intentions to my readers; but it seems that truth worn lightly is less familiar in

Germany, for example, than I had thought; German scholars are accustomed to discuss a serious subject with unrelieved gravity, at least in print, though in spoken lectures and in conversation they can display a delightful humour

Nos IX and XI are short pieces both written by invitation for conferences, and can I think be left to speak for themselves. The case is different with the more controversial no X My close stylistic examination of the letters 'Ενὸς σώματος and 'Η φίλαρχος, both attributed to Bishop Alexander, has convinced me that they come from different authors The former, though doubtless written at Alexander's request, perfectly resembles the work of Athanasius; it is forceful, concise and unpretentious; whereas the latter is much more discursive and notably polysyllabic, as one might expect of a bishop who wished to recommend his position to important and cultivated colleagues. There is nothing new in my suggestion, which was put forward more than a century ago by John Henry Newman; but I claim to have established by a mass of evidence that Möhler, Newman and Robertson were right

My title 'Athanasius' Earliest Written Work' of course implies that it precedes the pair of treatises *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione*. My argument has shown that he developed a full maturity of style at a very early date. If we accept Opitz's dating of 318 for 'Ενὸς σώματος, Athanasius was capable of drafting a forceful attack on Arianism at the age of about 20; whereas it is commonly held that the attacks did not begin until the late 330s (Hanson, in *The making of Ortholdoxy*, p 145, suggests 339). Nevertheless the two letters are closely linked; Opitz cannot be far wrong I used to think that the two treatises just mentioned must be very early, since they do not allude to Arianism. Nevertheless the evidence of the *Festal Letters* shows that Athanasius could simply ignore the Arians and concentrate on his own positive teaching; his first reference to 'Ariomaniacs' occurs in §9 of Letter 10, for 338, which accords closely with Hanson's dating It is thus more than possible that the two apologetic treatises were written in the 330s, as Charles Kannengiesser has argued The early dating of 'Ενὸς σώματος, and its assignment to Athanasius, still leave him as a sort of 'theological Mozart', to quote my admired and well-respected friend. But my arguments from both style and content are I think decisive: despite all difficulties, the two propositions must both be accepted.

Pieces XII and XIII both deal with the important question whether Athanasius acknowledged a fully human soul in Christ, to which I have already alluded in No. III. It seemed to me important to consider the evidence offered by Athanasius' exposition of biblical texts, especially those of the New Testament My examination of these in no IX, pp 234–7 on the whole confirms the opinion of modern critical scholars; Athanasius fails to attach any meaning to the texts referring to Christ's ψυχή which brings out its decisive theological importance as affirming a common humanity with ours. From this point on I pass to consider the evidence of the *Expositio in Psalmos*, which had long been accepted as an authentic work of St Athanasius. I had not realised that it had

been shown very recently by Dr Gilles Dorival that this work must assigned to a fifth-century author, as noted in Paper XIII. Nevertheless, I had no. XII reprinted, as the work in question had never, I think, received a full examination. In the next paper I returned to this subject, but here my main emphasis falls on the undoubtedly authentic *Epistula ad Marcellinum* Most of this, I confess, strikes me as rather prosy and unoriginal; but chapters 27–9 are interesting, first as showing some acquaintance with Plato's so-called doctrine of a tripartite soul, which does not appear elsewhere; and secondly as indicating Athanasius' attitude to the use of music in worship. Singing he regards as completely acceptible as pointing to 'the rhythmical and tranquil condition of the mind', but he refuses to endorse the Psalter's robust acceptance of trumpets, shawms and the like. The references to a well-tuned orchestra become for him a symbol of the proper coordination of our thoughts, though his brief reference to symbolic interpretation falls far short of the elaboration of this theme by the author of the *Expositiones*.

Paper XIV deals with Gregory of Nyssa's theology of the trinity I need not return to his argument in its general lines, which is convincing enough; but there is room for some further comment on the remarkable claim put forward in the treatise 'On Not Three Gods', also known as the *Epistle to Cledonius*. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, says Gregory, and yet we do not confess three Gods, but one God He uses the analogy of three men, say Peter, Paul and John; we commonly speak of them as three men; but in a correct use of language, we should speak of them as one man, since their manhood is one and the same.

I have to say that my careful examination of Gregory's argument has convinced me that it has all the attributes of a philosopher's paradox, putting forward a case which we would not dream of accepting if it were concerned with common life and not with transcendent realities. According to his argument, we could infer quite properly that every chariot is a one-horse chariot, since where there seem to be two, both of them are in fact one horse, if we take 'one' in its proper sense as indicating unity of species Or again, that the plural number, and indeed numerals themselves, can now be dispensed with. My objection would of course fail if we could show that in Gregory's view, when we refer to to divine realities, our ordinary logic will not apply. But I do not think this is the case; he seems to found his argument on perfectly general considerations of correct usage, though he also makes the point that the Bible itself adopts an incorrect usage as a concession to our human frailty.

But there is an even more disturbing aspect of Gregory's argument, remaining strictly within the theological field If we agree that, following the correct use of language, three men are really one man, should we not apply the same principle to the three divine Persons? In that case, while Gregory attempts to rebut the charge that he is a tritheist, his argument also proves him a Sabellian! The best answer, I think, is to say that his case is established on quite different,

theological considerations; the appeal to logic is a mere façade. But I do not for a moment suppose that Gregory himself saw it in this light; much more probably, he saw it as a triumphant vindication of his position, and many orthodox scholars have contentedly followed his lead.

Gregory has of course a reply to the objectionable inference about the divine Persons He argues that they differ in their mode of origination. But this cannot be sufficient; there would be no point in different modes of origination if they produced mere replicas of the original Source. We have to admit that the Persons, while equal in dignity, have different functions So much can be said by way of summary

My argument, as I said, is a challenge to orthodox opinion. But perhaps I could say that even such a very careful scholar, and fervent admirer of Gregory, as Dr Andreas Spira, wrote to me privately about my essay as first printed, expressing his regretful acceptance of my view.

Augustine is the subject of nos XV to XX. Once again, I have included a relatively simple piece to begin with, though it also deals with a concept that is both central and highly abstract in its verbal expression, but embodies the paradox that the abstract term in fact names the fullness of concrete existence and life No. XVI is more technical, but once again we meet the Platonic paradox that the highest reality must be all-embracing as well as unique Marius Victorinus shows us one possible *reductio ad absurdum* of this view; conceptual generality is in itself a mark of higher status and authority Augustine takes a bolder and more original line: Platonism is for him a useful ally to theology, but not a master to be slavishly followed; the concept of divine Being has always to be modified in accordance with the teaching of Holy Scripture Much the same will apply to the doctrine of divine simplicity, on which I shall comment in no. XXII.

No XVII took shape as a talk delivered to a cultivated but mostly non-specialist audience. I have included it since to my knowledge there has been no full-scale study of Augustine's cosmology I enjoyed writing it, and it was well received The text under discussion was Augustine's third attempt to comment in detail on the Book of Genesis, but the only one to approach the obvious difficulty of reconciling the Hebrew concept of the world's beginning with his fairly considerable knowledge of Greek science in his day. The reader will see at once that he has set himself an intractable problem in trying to harmonize them; but despite his deference to the literal sense of Scripture he realises the importance of trying to do so, and defends himself against the all too common charge of idle curiosity The reader, I think, will seldom be convinced but will always be fascinated by his ingenuity.

No XVIII and deals with the *De Magistro*, *The Master*, in which Augustine sets out his views on human language and especially the use of statements in imparting knowlege. His teaching, as I note, has been summarily condemned by Dr C A Kirwan, but has been defended in great detail by no less an authority than Professor Myles Burnyeat in his Inaugural Address to the Aristotelian So-

ciety, 1987 Burnyeat's article seems to me extraordinarily valuable if one wishes to learn something of the truth about the theory of meaning. On the other hand, he seems to be attributing to Augustine views which no competent teacher would dream of expounding if he were writing for an intelligent pupil on the level, say, of Adeodatus. In fact I should be surprised if Burnyeat's own paper, as a spoken lecture, could have been followed even by the extremely sophisticated and well-informed members of the Aristotelian Society For present purposes, I must be content to write far more simply, though I think I shall be on safe ground in dismissing Dr Kirwan's view.

I am not convinced by Burnyeat's suggestion that in his early chapters (down to 11.36) Augustine deliberately incorporates some mistakes which the alert reader will recognise; he does not suggest any parallel in Augustine for this extremely demanding procedure. Thus I am not convinced by his suggestion (p. 8, cf my XVIII, p. 1, note) that Augustine makes a clear division between purely dialectical suggestions and his own vision of the truth, since in the second section there are patent fallacies which he does not try to correct. My own opinion is that, despite some useful clarifications, Augustine has never shaken off the fatal attraction of the view that all words are names; see, e.g. 11 36, 'words . . . bid us look for things'. He does not see that some words can only be understood by their function, in the context of a sentence, of modifying the meaning of other word-groups; 'if' and 'not' are obvious examples. But I cannot, in the limits of this Introduction, develop my views on so complex a subject, even if I were capable of doing so.

Professor Rist, writing more simply for the non-specialist, seems to defend the view, deriving from Porphyry, that all statements can be seen as the conjunction of a subject and a predicate. If 'predicate' here means simply 'something other than the subject', this is uninformative; but since Porphyry seems to take 'predicate' as having the force of an adjective, his view fails to explain an enormous number of ordinary statements; I have cited 'a man learns', but perhaps a clearer example is 'the Queen was in the garden'; this does not tell us who or what the Queen was, i.e. 'the disambiguating features of the subject', but where she was; and though it is true that it tells us something about the Queen, it is equally true that it tells us something about the garden; that is where the Queen was. For the rest, my paper must speak for itself

No XIX, again, seems fairly straightforward. It does of course advert to the controversial question of Augustine's knowledge of Platonism. We are told that (his) 'first-hand knowlege of Plato was confined to the portion of the *Timaeus* translated by Cicero', and that 'he refers to the *Meno* often enough' but does not know of it in detail, relying instead on Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, I 57–8 – so Burnyeat, op. cit., p. 22, n. 30. But a footnote cannot convey the proper sense of a well-stocked mind accustomed to thrashing out his ideas in discussion; the scissors-and-paste approach inevitably suggested in this context is wholly alien to his mind.

I might perhaps have added a further word on memory I remember being puzzled by Augustine's comprehensive use of the word, which I myself had always understood in a more specific sense But in the modern world, where 'memory' names a vital function of computers and word-processors, there is no need to be puzzled; though our computers have not as yet developed anything very like the sorting-out process which I have attributed to the subconscious mind, or even to vague and ill-defined memories. On such questions, Augustine is far ahead of his time.

No. XX was delivered at Pamplona to a conference of theologians discussing St Gregory of Nyssa's work directed against the extreme Arian Eunomius Eunomius was a thorough going rationalist who held, *inter alia*, that the Greek word ἀγέννητος, 'ingenerate', 'having no beginning', was the sole and all-sufficient designation that could be used to name the divine nature But my essay has to take the form suggested by its title, namely an examination of the theories of names in the philosophical tradition which was available to Gregory, though I think very inadequately explored or criticized by him Did names correspond with the nature of what they represented, or were they merely the products of social convention? In the former case, did they in some way picture the realities they represented? How were they chosen? – could one imagine some anonymous 'name-giver', who fulfils the function assigned to Adam in Genesis 2: 19–20? I then come to the distinct question whether God himself can be named; but before this can get off the ground, I have to give some space to the word ἐπίνοια, which is used for the 'designations' applied to God's activities, assuming that there are many such activities which can be distinguished and named, as against the one mysterious divine nature, to which no name can be given. This discussion to some extent overlaps with no. XXI, which gives further thought to the concept of divine simplicity My researches seemed to indicate that the word ἐπίνοια had not been adequately discussed; whereas ὁπλότης, the word commonly used for 'simplicity', had been interpreted only in a moral sense, the 'sincerity' or 'unaffectedness' displayed by good men.

Returning to paper XX, I return to the problem that the Old Testament teaches variously that God himself cannot be named, and that He himself has indicated his name; though later Jewish tradition came to hold that the proper name 'Jahweh' was too sacred to be pronounced, so that in reading the Scriptures, where the reader would find the purely consonantal spelling IHWH, he would pronounce the word Adonai, 'my Lord'; so that later Latin authors referred to God by the composite name 'Jehovah'. More generally, I note that a proper name is not necessarily a personal name, as was often assumed. In conclusion I refer to the theories of Eunomius himself, who seems to suggest that the actual word ἀγέννητος is indispensable for sound theology The objection is obvious: if the actual Greek word must be used, only a Greek-speaker can formulate a sound theology; but if translation is allowable, an element of interpretation cannot be avoided. More generally, while Eunomius, like his elder

colleague Aetius, had some merits as a logician, his theology has the defect of eliminating any element of mystery from our conception of the Godhead, as well as making the divine Son and Spirit 'unlike' and thus inferior to the Father.

No. XXI returns to the words ἁπλότης and ἐπίνοια, mentioned above. I think my discussion can be followed without further comment; but if space had allowed I would have liked to mention the very interesting position adopted by Augustine, who assents to the traditional doctrine of divine simplicity, but is far from endorsing the extreme position adopted by Plotinus. Augustine has a considerable debt to Plotinus, amply documented in the footnotes to Henry Chadwick's translation of the Confessions; but he is far from adopting the view that the highest principle, as a perfect unity, can neither think nor be thought, since either activity would import a duality of subject and predicate. Plotinus apparently was not satisfied by the answer that perfect knowledge implies a perfect identification of the knower and the thing known. But this is not Augustine's method of argument. Rather, where there is an irremovable conflict beween the inferences of philosophy and the deliverances of Holy Scripture, we must be guided by the divine Word. Thus God must be fully personal; he must love us himself, and not delegate this divine work. Every line of Augustine recalls us to this tremendous mystery.

CHRISTOPHER STEAD

Haddenham, Cambridgeshire
February 2000

I

Greek Influence on Christian Thought

Christianity was first preached as an invitation to accept Jesus as Lord; his coming was seen as the fulfilment of God's purpose for the human race. But the earliest preachers could take for granted a belief in God's existence and his providence, already well recognized in Judaism. When the Church began to expand into non-Jewish societies, it met with enquirers who doubted or denied such beliefs, and was forced to defend them by argument; St Luke presents an early stage of this development in Acts 17.16ff., where St Paul encounters Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. By the second century, Christian writers had begun to restate their faith as a coherent theology, drawing largely upon Greek thought, which was by far the most important intellectual influence on the Roman Empire, and indeed since the Renaissance has reinvigorated our own art, science and philosophy.

The Greeks' most creative period can be roughly defined as 500–200 BC. By early Christian times they had become less bold and experimental, more accustomed to imitate classical models, and more inclined towards religion; atheism and scepticism were still taught, but were less popular in a society which sought reassurance. Nevertheless Greek culture retained an attraction and power which cannot be appreciated without some understanding of its great classical masterpieces.

Among the Greeks the visual arts were better developed than their music, which remained very simple; and their sculpture was far more impressive than their painting. Early Christian monuments echo contemporary Graeco-Roman styles, influenced by the great Greek masterpieces of the fourth century BC; thus the earliest portraits of Christ depict him as a handsome youth not unlike the Greek Apollo. The severe lines of the later Byzantine portraits, however, owe something to Graeco-Roman paintings like those discovered at

Pompeii. Greek architecture also made its contribution; the earliest large Christian churches were rectangular pillared halls, resembling the secular 'basilica' (law-court and commercial exchange). Later examples adopted the distinctive Roman use of arches and domes, which was finely exploited in the Byzantine period.

Greek literature did not always appeal to Christian writers. They often profess to despise fine writing; and of course the Greeks had produced, *inter alia*, bawdy comedies and erotic lyrics which were offensive to serious men. Christians made use of the Greek orators for training preachers, and of the historians, to supplement the biblical narratives; but the great Greek dramatists were undervalued, as presenting the gods in human guise. The attitude of St Cyprian is instructive; on becoming a bishop he threw away his pagan books, and professed that he owed nothing to paganism, while continuing to write the impeccable formal prose which he had learnt from his pagan schoolmasters. Tertullian, Jerome and others show a similar combination of affected disdain with actual indebtedness.

But such attitudes were not unknown in the pagan world. Pagan teachers would introduce their charges to the great Greek classics, especially the poetry of Homer; but they approached them in the serious, questioning frame of mind that was common in late antiquity, treating the Homeric poems as instructive works, indeed as actually intended to convey lessons about human life and destiny which the careful student could detect. The philosophers also were of course consulted for moral and religious guidance; but whereas Plato, for example, wrote many of his dialogues in a vein of light-hearted, tentative enquiry, his followers usually regard them as an authoritative text in which apparent inconsistencies must be explained away. One reason for this was the importance which pagan educators attached to rhetoric, the art of persuasion and public speaking, where self-contradiction is a fault to be avoided at any cost. Christians accordingly made strenuous efforts to present the Bible as an inspired book, consistent and harmonious in all its parts. What we regard as crude and primitive ideas expressed in the Old Testament could be defused by spiritualizing interpretations like those invented by high-minded expositors of Homer.

One favourite method among others was to treat the offending passage as an allegory. Thus Homer describes the high god Zeus reminding his consort Hera of her adultery with the fire-god Hephaestus, for which she was bound in golden chains (*Iliad*

15.18ff.). A first-century commentator explains that 'the words of Zeus to Hera are the words of God to matter'; he transforms the wronged husband into a supreme creator who imposes restraints on matter to produce an orderly world. The method of allegory grew up at Alexandria and was already applied to Scripture by the Greek-speaking Jewish aristocrat Philo, who died *c.* AD 50. Origen, who records the interpretation of Zeus and Hera, (*Against Celsus* 6.42, written *c.* AD 250) uses similar methods to explain puzzling or objectionable passages of Scripture; many examples are given in his *On First Principles*, 4.3.

But it was Greek philosophy to which Christian thought was chiefly indebted. 'Philosophy' means 'the love of wisdom'; in ancient times it included a great variety of subjects which are nowadays regarded as separate disciplines. In early Christian times it was conventionally divided into three departments: logic, ethics, and physics. 'Logic' and 'ethics' meant roughly what they mean today, despite dramatic developments in both subjects in the last hundred years. Ethics in Aristotle's day had included political science and the germ of economics, but these had little interest for later thinkers. 'Physics' was a general term for the study of the universe; it included all that was then known of physics proper, cosmology, astronomy, geography, biology, psychology, and theology too, for those who believed in divine action affecting the world. We should also notice two studies closely allied to philosophy, but not normally reckoned as belonging to it, namely medicine and mathematics. These had little direct influence on Christian thought, but the sheer brilliance of Greek mathematics in particular compels our attention.

Logic was virtually the creation of Aristotle, who was also accepted as the primary authority until well on in the nineteenth century. Christian writers tended to criticize his *minutiloquium*, his obsession with exact detail; and it is certainly true that the minority of theologians who did try to adopt his methods, by expressing their teaching as a series of syllogisms, make notably dismal reading. The reason is not that Christian teaching is necessarily illogical, but rather that logical method requires exact definition and consistent use of terms; and this is hard to achieve where religious truths have been expressed in poetic language or in metaphors drawn from everyday life. It is especially misleading if, on a pretext of exact definition, one represents ancient writers as arguing for or against a proposition defined in contemporary terms. The better course was

to pay attention to the uses of metaphor; and here the Greek literary critics and their Latin imitators could offer valuable guidance. But the way was constantly blocked by the assumption that the Bible must be a wholly consistent and uniformly uplifting text, rather than the legacy of many different writers of different periods and different levels of culture, as we tend to see it today.

Greek ethics, in early Christian times, usually assumes a distinctive theory of human nature. Most philosophers, Pythagoreans, Platonists and many Stoics, held that consciousness arises within the soul, a personal being which can function independently of the body and survives its death (whereas for the Hebrews the so-called 'soul' is an impersonal animating principle, and consciousness can only arise within an animated body). Yet Plato suggested two distinctly different pictures of the soul. The *Phaedo* sees it as essentially concerned with higher truths, in contrast with the distracted pleasure-loving body; but the *Republic* describes it as having three parts, of which only the highest, the mind or intellect, is capable of real virtue; it is the directive principle which our emotions and impulses ought to obey.

Plato's strongly idealized view of the intellect will hardly convince us moderns; we see too clearly that the intellect itself can be misused or corrupted. Moreover it distorted the Christian moral tradition. St Paul, though he spoke of antagonism between flesh and spirit (Gal. 5.17), accepted self-denial for the sake of his mission (Phil. 4.12) without condemning bodily satisfactions; but later Christians, like many pagans, often assumed that the first step towards moral improvement was to neglect the body and cultivate the mind. Charity, if it meant concern for the *bodily* needs of others, was thus often undervalued.

Christians made only a rather selective use of the Greek moralists. Plato was widely praised, for reasons which will soon appear; even so, his *Republic* caused offence by its eccentric programme for women in society, as mere child-bearers without attachments either to husbands or children; while his *Symposium*, a magnificent defence of physical love as a gateway to higher affections, presupposed the Greek acceptance of homosexuality. Aristotle, who wrote important treatises on ethics, was criticized for what seemed an unheroic view, that perfect happiness requires some degree of outward prosperity; also, less fairly, for his concept of virtue as a middle course between two opposite failings (e.g. cowardice and rashness); this 'doctrine of the mean' was often misconstrued as implying only a moderate

enthusiasm for virtue. The Stoics were often tedious to read, and moreover changed their ground; the earlier Stoics preached a fierce and exclusive morality; perfect wisdom was demanded, and the slightest occasional lapse condemned; all other supposed goods were considered worthless. But the later Stoics took a more moderate view: our nature, they said, prompts us to seek certain advantages, such as bodily health and tranquillity; these were not good in the absolute sense, yet it was 'preferable' to seek them, at least for other people. It is this later phase of Stoic ethics, with its stress on common duties, which influenced St Paul's teaching.

There was thus no universally approved authority; the most convenient handbooks were probably Cicero's popularizing Latin adaptations, which set various systems side by side. And the further difficulty of amalgamating Greek and biblical teaching meant that Christian ethics was slow to develop a coherent framework. The Bible provided simple folk with divine laws and virtuous examples. These were supplemented by the doctrine, derived from the Stoics, of a 'natural law', which implied that all men have the same perception of basic moral duties (1 Cor. 11.14); this ignored the actual evidence of diversity among different races, and even suggested, absurdly, that wrongdoers are adequately punished by the agonies of conscience that they are bound to feel. But Christian Platonists tended to define goodness as a right choice of objectives; our affections must be fixed on the eternal rewards. Indeed Augustine, for instance, tends to suggest that all our feelings are forms of affection; fear, e.g. of robbery, is really a bye-form of the love of riches and ease.

Moreover the clash between Platonic and biblical views of the soul confused the Christian teaching on the afterlife. The Hebrews looked forward to a resurrection of the body; only so could consciousness be restored; and it would take place on a day of judgement after a period of absolute non-existence. But Christians tended (as many still do) to accept also the survival of the soul as Plato conceived it, so that consciousness continues without interruption beyond the moment of death (cf. Luke 23.43). But granted the promise of a fully surviving consciousness, it is hard to see the point of a subsequent resurrection of the body, which Christians were bound to accept in accordance with their Creeds.

Before coming to the central topics of Greek philosophy, something should be said about their mathematics. The Greeks excelled here through their intense interest in solving problems for their own

sake, irrespective of any practical value. Their geometry, as formulated by Euclid (*c.* 300 BC) held the field until the nineteenth century, and is still acceptable as a basic discipline. In arithmetic they achieved remarkable results despite the handicap of a clumsy system of numeration, using thirty letters of the alphabet to denote units, tens and hundreds up to 1000, where the system began to repeat. Consequently, to know that twice three is six did not at once indicate how to multiply twenty by thirty; it was as if we wrote the two sums as 'b × c = f' and 'k × l = x'.

The Bible, in 1 Kings 7.23, states that Solomon made a 'sea', or ceremonial water-tank, ten cubits in diameter and thirty cubits round, thus implying that the constant we know as π is 3.0. The Greeks not only knew that it was not an exact whole number, but that it was not expressible by any ratio of whole numbers: Archimedes (*c.* 287–212 BC) computed it by approximation as between 3 1/7 and 3 10/71, i.e. roughly between 3.142857 and 3.140845. Many further examples could be given, if space allowed.

On the other hand, the Greeks did not solve the much more difficult problem of the nature of number itself, which was elucidated by Bertrand Russell some time ago. If I understand him right, the primary function of numbers is that by which (e.g.) we 'number off' the houses in a street; cardinal numbers, which we use to quantify a group, depend on the further operation of 'summing up' how many houses we have passed. The Greeks, however, assumed that the cardinal numbers were primary, and that the whole system of numbers originated from the 'monad', the number one; their arithmetic lacking a zero. Mathematically minded philosophers such as Pythagoras and his followers could thus suppose that the Monad was the source of all rational order in the universe; or, put conversely, that the creative power behind it had the characteristics of the Monad. This prompted Christians to think that God must be completely simple and strictly immutable, a view which still remains the official orthodoxy, though it has recently come in for vigorous attacks.

This doctrine of God was combined, rather awkwardly, with the biblical picture of God as a creator and loving Father of the world and mankind. Plato, moreover, gave support to this theology through an influential dialogue, the *Timaeus*, which pictures the creation of the world by a divine 'craftsman' or 'artificer'. It was never clear whether this divinity was meant to be the source of all perfection (as in Christianity), or merely to imitate some reality

higher than himself. But Plato's work was valued by Christians as confirming the biblical account of the creation. Yet when God came to be described in mathematical terms as simple and immutable, it became less easy to understand his providential care of the world; this must, it would seem, require a divine mind which can attend to many different concerns. Christians tended to solve the problem by developing St John's concept of the divine Word or Logos in a manner already foreshadowed by the Stoics; God the Father was seen as wholly transcendent; he exercised his providential care not directly, but through his Logos; who is sometimes described, e.g. by Athanasius, as actually pervading the physical world, and indeed inherits the Father's title of 'Craftsman', *demiourgos*.

Greek philosophy affected Christianity most directly through the department of 'physics' together with the very abstract study which came to be called metaphysics. The early history of this subject is far too complex to be summarized here; but we may notice two philosophers earlier than Plato who left their mark on all subsequent thought.

Parmenides (*c.* 515–450) attempted to deduce the nature of the universe, by purely logical methods, from the nature of being as such. He treated 'being' as a simple concept, a view which logicians have now discarded; for it can indicate both passing states ('he is ill') and invariable facts ('he is a man'); or again, mere existence, as opposed to fantasy; or again truth, as opposed to falsehood ('that is so'). But for Parmenides these concepts were indistinguishable; thus the necessities of logic required that the world, despite appearances, must be unchanging, simple and compact (for empty space would imply the contradiction that 'not-being *is*').

In sharp contrast Heraclitus (*c.* 544–484) saw the world as a perpetual process of change; but farsightedly perceived that this need not make it unintelligible, since its changes take place in an orderly sequence and in principle can be measured. They were governed, he thought, by a 'logos', a controlling agency diffused throughout the universe; Heraclitus' obscure language does not make it clear whether this logos should be considered simply as a mathematical measure or ratio, or as a controlling mind.

Plato (*c.* 429–347) was not impressed by Heraclitus' claim that change can be measured. He sought not only mathematical but moral truths, where it is harder to distinguish objective changes from changes and uncertainties in human judgement. He therefore saw

reality or being (*ousia*) as twofold; an eternal world of perfect Forms, perceived only by the mind, and the confused and changeable world of perceptible things, which become real and definite only in so far as they imitate those eternal prototypes. This view is known as 'Plato's Theory of Ideas'; but it is important to note that these are objective realities, not just products of our thinking; Plato calls them both *ideai*, Ideas, and *eidē*, Forms.

Plato never made it clear what kinds of Forms there are; it sometimes appears that there is a Form for every class of natural phenomena (e.g. even for diseases!); but sometimes only where perfection is possible. Some later Platonists regarded the Forms not only as 'thinkable' (*noēta*) but as thinking beings (*noera*), playing down the original emphasis on their unchanging character; thus Christians could easily regard them not only as moral ideals but as equivalent to the biblical angels. This was a drastic departure. Plato had pictured the Forms as a hierarchy, such that the more inclusive Forms are nobler and better. But there can be no society between beings of different logical levels; Socrates may converse with a nobler and better man, say Parmenides; but not with ideal manhood itself, any more than a woman can marry the average man. *A fortiori* the all-inclusive Form, pure Being itself, could have no contact with human beings. Nevertheless Christian writers adopted 'pure Being' as an appropriate symbol of God's supremacy and unchanging power.

Aristotle (384-322) raised logical objections to Plato's doctrine of transcendent Forms, but retained the notion of form as an immanent principle which, e.g., guides the development of living things. The form (small 'f' now better!) belongs to the species; individual beings exhibit the same form in a separate bit of matter; and the word 'being' (*ousia*) can denote either the form, or the matter, or the compound individual which results from their union. But this relatively clear picture is confused by two other developments. First, Aristotle modifies the sense of 'being' by recognizing a special sense which came to be known as 'substance'. A thing's 'substance' is the character which it must have and can never lose (contrast the sense of 'being' in 'he is a man' and 'he is here'); and 'substances' are things which retain their identity despite changes of size, condition, etc. Secondly, despite his emphasis on form and species, Aristotle asserted, in the *Categories*, that the individual, not the species, is the primary form of being, or 'primary substance'.

The notion of substance became a battle-ground for later Chris-

tian theologians; but before describing this, we must introduce a related term, 'hypostasis', which owes its popularity to the Stoics, beginning in the century after Aristotle (Zeno, *c.* 332–262; Chrysippus, *c.* 280–207 BC). The Stoics wholeheartedly accepted Heraclitus' picture of the universe as a process of perpetual change (whereas Aristotle saw it as basically unchanging, and indeed eternal). They held that matter is the only true reality; thoughts and concepts arise in men's material organ of thought. But they also held that every kind of matter exhibits some degree of order; this increases as we pass to plants, to animals and human beings, and finally to the universe itself, which is pervaded by a supremely rational principle or Logos, who can appropriately be honoured as a god.

'Hypostasis' literally means 'that which underlies or supports', e.g. the legs of an animal, the base of a statue. The word took on many different meanings; but we have to mention two, which, strangely, have almost exactly opposite implications. 'Hypostasis' can mean the 'underlying reality' of a thing, which probably it will share with other things; or it can mean the 'emergent perceptible reality', which is more likely to be taken as individual. The former meaning is suggested, e.g., by a counterfeit coin; the coin 'really is' lead, the base metal underlying its gilded surface. The second meaning stems from the use of 'hypostasis' to mean a 'sediment'. The Stoics pictured the universe as evolving from a primary condition of pure fire, which by degrees produces solid matter, like a sediment or precipitate deposited by a liquid, and so gives rise to persistent individual things.

The natural Latin equivalent for 'hypostasis' was *substantia*; but this latter word was used to translate the Greek *ousia*; a better Latin equivalent here would have been *essentia* (cf. 'essence'); but this word sounded artificial to the Latins, and was not much used before Augustine's time, though it became popular later with the medieval philosophers.

Greek theologians came to describe the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as a triad, or Trinity, of divine beings. They often spoke of three hypostases, i.e. three distinct individual beings; to acknowledge only one divine hypostasis might suggest, e.g., that only the Father is divine. But the Latins, following Tertullian, spoke of them as three persons proceeding from a *single* 'substance', as having a common origin in the Father and a common divinity; and some Greeks agreed to accept the idea of 'one hypostasis', taking that word

in its larger sense. The Latins disliked 'three hypostases', which to them suggested three gods.

The tension and misunderstanding came to a head when Arius (*c.* 265–337) began to affirm that the Son and Spirit were subordinate and hence inferior to the Father. The Council of Nicaea, AD 325, ruled that they were 'the same in being' (or 'consubstantial', or 'coessential'); and the position was clarified by the Cappadocian Fathers, half a century later, who argued that the recognition of one 'being' or 'substance' did not conflict with 'three hypostases', which they now clearly defined as *individual* realities, or 'persons'

Much ink has been wasted in discussing the precise meaning which the Council of Nicaea gave to 'consubstantial'; did it imply 'same individual being', or merely 'same species', or something else. It must be emphasized that the Nicene Fathers were not trained philosophers; in particular, Aristotle's distinction of *ousia*, 'substance', as *either* individual or generic, was quite unfamiliar to them. *All* the terms they had available at this stage carried a variety of senses which their users only half understood. Thus modern scholars who have debated whether such-and-such a term was used 'in the sense of Person', or the like, give us an impression of clearly defined alternatives which is completely unhistorical.

Something more should be said of 'Person', none the less. Latin usage was largely based on legal convention; a 'person' was anyone competent to plead in a law-court, excluding slaves and minors. The corresponding Greek word *prosōpon* suggested rather a character in a play (cf. our phrase *dramatis personae*). Neither word strongly emphasized the qualities we associate with 'personality', viz. originality, enterprise, leadership. Moreover, as first used, neither word *necessarily* implied an individual; a party to a law-suit could be a group of people acting jointly, and in a play a chorus of actors could take a single part. But later Christian usage followed the Cappadocians' clear distinction between (individual) Person and (common) Substance; other kinds of individuals, e.g. individual islands or stars, were left out of account

Christians were disappointingly slow to realize that the same distinction applied to the word *phusis*, 'nature'; and this led to bitter disputes concerning the doctrine of Christ which should have been avoided. It should have been clear that Christ existed 'in two *phuseis*', *provided* that this was clearly understood as indicating two states or conditions, his eternal fellowship with the Father, and his incarnate

life as man. But devout eastern Christians were haunted by the suspicion that 'two *phuseis*' must imply two distinct individual beings, a divine Christ and a human Jesus, and consequently withdrew to form the Monophysite communities. The orthodox faith, as defined by the Council of Chalcedon, AD 451 agreed with the Latins that Christ exhibits two *phuseis*, two manners of being, divine and human, united in this one unique individual, or in a single hypostasis.

In conclusion: Christianity developed out of a Jewish sect into a world religion through the use of its Greek inheritance, by moulding its beliefs into a coherent system which could appeal to thoughtful men and leaders of society, without losing the element of faith and personal commitment exhibited by simpler believers. If we have learnt to appreciate the distinctive genius of Hebrew religious thought, this has come about through the gradual development of scholarly methods which were initiated by Greek literary critics. It remains a live question whether a Christian theology expressed in Greek concepts is still serviceable for a Church faced with the challenge of further expansion, e.g. in Africa and Latin America. What can be said with assurance is that such questions could not even be raised, let alone considered, without the arts of accurate statement and rational debate which the Church absorbed from its Greek-speaking adherents

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Hatch, E, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church* (London, Williams and Norgate, 7th edn 1898 and repr.), is still well worth consulting. Look in libraries or second-hand bookshops for a spine lettered 'The Hibbert Lectures 1888'. The faint-hearted may prefer to begin with Lecture II. See also: Jaeger, W, *Early Christianity and Greek Paideia* (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1962); Chadwick, H, *Early Christian Thought and the Classical Tradition* (Oxford University Press, 1966); Markus, R A, *Christianity in the Roman World*, (London, Thames and Hudson, 1975), with excellent illustrations

II

The Appropriation of the Philosophical Concept of God by early Christian Theologians: W. Pannenberg's Thesis Reconsidered

Patristic scholars live nowadays under the threat of the axe. I do not mean this quite literally; no doubt a radical Marxist government would find other Christian victims to polish off more quickly than the modest and retiring scholars whom I intend to address. But since the time of Harnack at the latest we have had to live with the accusation that the Fathers whom we study have falsified the original and authentic message of Christianity; misled by the seductions of Greek philosophy, even when they protested against them, they have bequeathed to us a theology which misconstrues and abridges the biblical insistence on God's transcendence, his freedom, and his total sovereignty over this and all possible worlds. Harnack of course detects other failings, which will not detain us on this occasion; for instance, that whereas Jesus taught men to worship his heavenly Father, the Christian Fathers taught them to worship Jesus. This whole complex of accusations, though often dismissed, has recently acquired new force through the rise of liberation theology in the Third World, and its newly explicit demand that Christianity should now shake off its traditional dependence on European, and therefore on Greco-Roman, forms of thought

Even Roman Catholic scholars, bred in a tradition which speaks of a natural knowledge of God and of grace which perfects nature but does not remove it, are becoming sensitive to this demand; for Protestants it would seem only to underline a conviction which is integral to their tradition. But Protestant scholars, with their Anglican and other allies, have in fact played a leading part in patristic studies; and in recent years many of them have been impressed by a paper published by Wolfhart Pannenberg some twenty-five years ago, 'Die Aufnahme des philosophischen Gottesbegriffes als dogmatisches Problem der frühchristlichen Theologie', *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 70 (1959), pp 1–45, which appears in English in the second volume of his *Basic*

Questions in Theology, pp 119–83.[1] Professor Adolf Martin Ritter has said of this piece 'Es ist seinerzeit unter protestantischen Patristikern mit nahezu einhelligem Jubel begrüsst worden, während es andernorts eher betretenes Schweigen auslöste. Einer ernsthaften Diskussion aber ist es nirgends gewürdigt worden, bis es zwanzig Jahre nach seiner Erstveröffentlichung C J de Vogel einer temperamentvollen Kritik unterzog'.[2] Dr. Ritter's own discussion is excellent within the limits he has set himself, occupying seven pages in a more general survey of recent work on the relations between Platonism and early Christianity. But I believe there is room for a more thorough-going critique. In general, the reputation of this famous piece is well deserved; Pannenberg handles questions of crucial importance with a wealth of learning and a good eye for what is relevant; but his work is markedly uneven in quality. Much of it is true and important; some of it, I believe, is over-simplified; and in places Pannenberg seems confused, if not self-contradictory. As a result, it is not easy to form a clear impression of the course of his argument.

The literary structure is simple enough; it is divided into three parts, preceded by a brief introduction; but the three parts are notably unequal in length and complexity; Part III in fact extends to two thirds of the total space, and is divided into five subsections, of which the fourth alone occupies sixteen pages; the fifth is also substantial, but its last six pages are in effect a general summary of the whole preceding argument.

The introduction explains 'the adverse judgements of Harnack, Loofs and others upon the Apologists of the second century' and their basis in the dogmatics of Albrecht Ritschl. This is a fairly familiar thesis, which incidentally was echoed in an early work by T.F. Torrance;[3] I need not consider it further.

Of the three main parts that follow, the first is entitled 'The Philosophical Concept of God'; the second carries the title 'The Task and Danger in Theological Linkage with the Philosophical Idea of God'. It sets out rather briefly some features of biblical monotheism which Pannenberg takes to be crucial; broadly speaking, he contends that the philosophers' contribution to Christian theology was a two-edged affair; it was helpful as providing confirmation of the claim that there is only one true God; it was unhelpful, in that the philosophers thought of God as the origin from which our world is derived, and as a being whose nature is in some way restricted and indeed deducible from the fact that he *is* the origin. This conflicts with the biblical

[1] This is translated from the German reprint *Grundfragen Systematischer Theologie* (Göttingen, 1971), pp 296–346.

[2] A M Ritter, 'Platonismus und Christentum in der Spätantike', *Theologische Rundschau* 49:1 (1984), pp 31–56; here p 39; C J. de Vogel, *Scripta Theologica* 11 (1979), pp 929–52. Since writing the above I have had the privilege of a brief discussion with Professor de Vogel; but my text remains substantially as delivered in Cambridge in October 1984.

[3] *The Doctrine of Grace in the Apostolic Fathers* (London 1948).

doctrine of God's sovereign freedom in relation to all other beings; in fact, says Pannenberg, 'God, as the origin, is never merely the invisible ground of present reality, but the free, creative source of the ever new and unforeseen'.[4] Hence, he writes, 'wherever philosophical concepts are taken over, they must be remolded in the light of the history-shaping freedom of the biblical God' (p. 139 = 15/312).

In Part III, which bears the general title 'The Theological Appropriation', Pannenberg considers five different aspects of the philosophical concept of God, and tries to show where they helped to articulate the biblical doctrine and where they tended to obscure it. I shall of course return to this part and review it in detail; at this stage it will perhaps be enough to note that Pannenberg's judgement on the contribution of the philosophers is on the whole rather negative; while helpful at times, they have misled the Fathers into neglecting important aspects of biblical theology. But this negative judgement takes a most unexpected form. Pannenberg's initial remarks about the drawbacks of envisaging God simply as the source from which the world is derived might lead us to expect an argument that the Greeks made the mistake of connecting God too closely with the world, as its origin and explanation whose properties can be deduced from it. But in fact Pannenberg comes to precisely the opposite conclusion, namely that the philosophers came to envisage a God who cannot enter into any meaningful relation with the world of time and change. So he writes 'Immutability and timelessness, simplicity, propertylessness, and namelessness, have repeatedly forced the concept of God into an unbridgeable distance from the contingent changes of historical reality in which the salvation of men is decided, and the assertions of faith regarding God's historical acts of salvation were purchased' – presumably by the best of the Christian Fathers – 'only at the of expense of violating the strict sense of these attributes' (p. 180 = 43/343). In other words, the philosophical doctrine which the best of the Fathers had to remould was not an unexciting immanentism, as the early pages might lead us to think, but a baffling transcendence. We shall have to consider whether this unexpected περιπέτεια can be adequately supported by the argument in detail.

Let me then return to Part I, which I have not yet summarized, and which raises troublesome questions in my mind; though I do not regard all the questions as equally important.

First, is Pannenberg justified in speaking of 'The Philosophical Concept of God'? He notes, quite correctly I think, that early Christian theology was indebted to Middle Platonism for 'the conceptual tools for its reflections upon the nature of God' (p. 122 = 3/299); but he also suggests that Middle

[4] My quotations are taken from the English translation mentioned on p 2 above; I give references to this, followed by references to the original *ZKG* article, then to the German reprint; here p 138 = 14/311.

Platonism represents a kind of consensus among, the philosophers; so 'The theories that had arisen in Greek philosophy concerning the divine reality by no means present a chaos of unrelated, merely adjacent, opinions. On the contrary, these opinions grew out of a common formulation of the problem and constitute variations on one and the same theme' (p. 123 = 3/299). But is this really tenable? No doubt there was a complex of theological views which was acceptable to many or even most second-century philosophers; nevertheless, some philosophers were sceptics, some were atheists, some were Epicurean polytheists; and if we comment, quite properly, that such untypical views could not possibly have influenced Christian thinkers, it is worth remembering that an un-platonized, unassimilated Stoicism has left its mark on Tertullian's aberrant description of God as a *corpus*. But this is a fairly trivial point; I pass to the more important question:

Is Pannenberg right in suggesting that the Middle Platonists were continuing a tradition that goes back to the Olympian deities and to the sages of Miletus? When he speaks of 'a common formulation of the problem' in the passage just quoted, Pannenberg is appealing to a theory developed by Werner Jaeger in his book *The Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford, 1947). We are reminded of 'a peculiar feature of the Olympian deities, *viz*, their peculiar immanental character'; Pannenberg writes, 'The fact that the gods are the origin of the reality encountered in normal experience is not in itself anything specifically Greek but a widespread conviction. But that their essence is exhausted in this function, and does not have a hidden side, which is reserved for a special revelation, is a peculiarity of the Olympian deities' (p. 124 = 4, 5/300). And he clearly thinks that this formulation of the problem persists in later Greek philosophy; accordingly 'the truly divine can be grasped by an inference from the known state of reality back to its unknown origin' (p. 125 = 5/301), introducing a discussion of the early physicists; or the beginning of section two of the first part: 'The question about the true God as the origin of present things and normal processes' (p. 126 = 6/302), leading on immediately to a mention of Justin Martyr and of the concern for a unity of explanatory principles in second-century Platonism [5] Even the discussion of Plotinus mentions 'the initial tendency of the philosophical question about the form of the divine' and goes on to refer once again to 'the inner unity of the philosophical concept of God, regardless of all the variations in its formulation' (p. 133 = 11/307).

But by this time, halfway through the third section of the first part, the alert reader of Pannenberg will, as I have just explained, have suffered a powerful intellectual shock. In the first section we were told that for the Greeks 'the truly divine can be grasped by inference', etc., because God is the origin of a

[5] References to the method of inference recur throughout the paper; it may suffice to cite the English pp. 133, 143, 157–9, 165, 177, 179.

knowable world and 'his essence is exhausted in this function'; but the third section is headed 'The Otherness and Unknowability of the Origin'; moreover this doctrine is exhibited as the outcome of precisely the same tendency as was already described in section one; so Pannenberg writes, 'nevertheless, the insight into the otherness of the divine was already rooted in the initial tendency of the philosophical idea of God' (p. 128 = 7/303). The argument seems to be that the method of rational inference led by successive stages to the theories of God as mind, as completely simple, and as inaccessible to human thought. Nevertheless, these are all products of the same method; hence even after describing the most extreme theories of divine transcendence, Pannenberg can still write that 'the divine spirit remained bound to a material principle' (p. 142 = 17/314). In other words, precisely the same formulation of the problem produced the conviction, first, that God is totally knowable, and secondly, that God is totally unknowable.

Now as a piece of plain reporting this might possibly be correct. Individual philosophers often do hold mutually conflicting opinions; *a fortiori*, one and the same movement of thought may harbour opposite views at two different stages of its history. What is disconcerting is that Pannenberg shows little awareness of having noticed the inconsistency which he discloses. Moreover, if two contradictory conclusions emerge, there is at least some reason to suspect that contradictory tendencies were at work, and a careful thinker would seek to disprove this possibility. My own suspicion is that Greek philosophical thought was never dominated by rationalistic assumptions to the extent that Pannenberg has assumed; rationalist tendencies, though coming easily to the enquiring Greek mind, were often checked by a sense of ultimate mystery; the Olympian religion had no monopoly of attention; the sense of numinous mystery and fascination and horror is powerfully expressed in the Dionysiac cult; Plato himself pronounced that ultimate Goodness could not be described by any analogy. And some at least of the later Platonists, Christians included, tended to emphasize Plato's spirituality and discount his logic; so it should come as no surprise that some of Plato's own most hard-headed bits of reasoning were later treated as a species of revelation; or, for that matter, that Gnostic teachers of no intellectual ability whatsoever dressed up their third-rate philosophical gleanings in the trappings of divine disclosures.

But Pannenberg, it appears, would accept the judgement that a sense of God's otherness appeared quite early in the Greek philosophical tradition. One of the most baffling features of his view in his insistence that this doctrine is *not* a late development which in some degree qualified the immanentism of the method of inference, but is actually a product of it: 'the insight into the otherness of the divine was already rooted in the initial tendency of the philosophical question about God' (p. 128 = 7/303). The mysterious nature of God, he says, was already expressed by Xenophanes (p. 130 =

8/304) and in Plato's teaching that the Good 'transcends essence'; Plato's description of God as mind was also an attempt to convey it (p 130 = 9/305), though it proved an inadequate means of escape from immanentist tendencies and had to be supplemented by the doctrine that God is simple And although *formal* recognition of the incomprehensibility of God arrived late on the scene, the tendency towards it was already contained in the recognition of God's otherness

Pannenberg therefore seems to be claiming (a) that in Greek philosophy 'the divine spirit always remained bound to a material principle' though *per contra* the concept of God was forced 'into an unbridgeable distance from the contingent changes of historical reality', etc (see pp 2, 3 above); (b) but this need not have happened if God had been viewed in more personal terms expressing his faithfulness and freedom of action; but (c), as we shall find, his freedom is to be understood in terms of contingency which 'overturns all expectations and world pictures' (p 181 = 44/344); (d) it also 'protects' God against any inference as to his nature from his operations (p 171= 37/337) I cannot help wondering whether this structure of thought is either coherent or tolerable It seems to make the 'personal' God more remote than the God of the philosophers; and his 'faithfulness' seems to be presumed in default of any consistency which would allow it to be known

Let us now take a closer look at Part II which I briefly described above It begins by sketching the emergence of monotheism among the Jews, and the universalism which it implies The God of Israel, they claimed, is in fact the God of all nations But how could other nations be brought to acknowledge his dominion? Pannenberg replies, quite properly, that the Jews appealed to the monotheistic tradition already developed in Greek philosophy: 'The universal claim of the God of Israel first acquired compelling validity for all men by virtue of the fact that first the Jewish and then the Christian mission presented the God of Israel as the true God sought by philosophy' (p 136 = 13/309) 'Compelling validity' seems to me a good translation of the German phrase 'verpflichtende Kraft', implying both the persuasive force of the Jewish claim as thus reformulated, and its absolute authority Pannenberg does not mean, I take it, that the prophecies of, say, deutero-Isaiah have no *authority* in their original poetic and Semitic phrasing; but that their authority could only be *recognized* by 'all men' (or 'all reasonably cultivated Greek speakers'?), and so become 'compelling', when translated into philosophical terms with which they were familiar Not that the alliance with philosophy was inescapable or predetermined, as the English term 'compelling' might possibly suggest Some Jewish teachers, and some Christian teachers, attacked the philosophers, condemning their disagreements, their contentious vanity, and their failure to match their principles by their conduct (cf p 140 = 16/313) In deploying such arguments the Jewish and Christian missioners were no doubt developing familiar themes that lay ready to hand in the Greek

tradition But others in both camps ignored the philosophers; given a bit more eloquence and personality they might have had great influence There is no reason why Jewish preachers of the first century AD should not have spoken in the authentic tones of fifth-century prophecy; and indeed the devout of their time were ready to listen But in fact, as we know, prophecy was by then a spent force Prophets there were, both Jewish and pagan, as well as Gnostic and Hermetic sages But their achievements were insubstantial; before long they were forgotten, and rightly

Pannenberg then explains that 'the linkage with philosophy was facilitated by the tendency of the philosophical idea of God towards unity' (p 137 = 14/310); but he goes on to explain that much of the force and distinctiveness of the biblical view was lost, or at least endangered, by this linkage I assent to this verdict, but with some reservations on his account of the biblical view; for if we speak of 'the personal mode in which the living God confronted men' (p 138 = 14/311) we certainly do *not* mean that God speaks to men simply in the accents of another man – as if *this* were something the Greeks should have realized The notion that God can appear in human form, and be mistaken for a man, belongs to a very primitive phase of Israelite tradition (e g Gen 32:24–30, Judges 13:19–22), and it is only a short advance to imagine God's voice as mistaken for a human voice (I Sam 3:4–8) The great prophets picture God as a mysterious being who impinges on men in a personal mode only by moving their own minds and their own lips to conceive thoughts and utter prophecies beyond the compass of their own unaided powers And Greek philosophers developed a not dissimilar theory of divine inspiration

My third criticism of Pannenberg's Part II is a more technical point, but not I think unimportant He argues that 'the universal claim of the Israelites to worship the one true God' led to 'a linkage with philosophy facilitated by the tendency of the philosophical idea of God towards unity' (p 137 = 14/310) This is of course true as far as it goes; but Pannenberg seems to ignore the striking contrast between the Hebrew and the Greek notions of unity For the Hebrew, the claim that 'the Lord, thy God is one' is relatively straightforward; it means that there is only one being who can properly be called God, who is rightly to be worshipped, and so on But Greek speculations about unity have a subtlety and complexity, and also a set of endemic confusions, of which Pannenberg seems unaware I intend to discuss these more fully elsewhere;[6] for the moment let us simply recall the strange interpretations of Deut 6:4 and the like produced by Philo under the influence of Greek philosophy He says, for instance, that God resembles the Monad because of his μόνσσις, his solitary existence (*spec leg* 2 176, cf *fuga* 92,

[6] See also my book *Divine Substance* (Oxford 1977) pp 180–89

Abr 22); where the Bible surrounds God with his heavenly court, Philo makes him the prototypical hermit, with more than a suggestion of the Aristotelian deity engaged in his νόησις νόησεως. Again he suggests that God being one is necessarily simple (*leg all* 2.2, *mut nom* 184), an idea which goes back to Xenophanes among the Greeks and passes on to Irenaeus, but has no root in the Hebrew tradition. For of course there is no necessary connexion between uniqueness and simplicity. A thing can be simple without being unique, as were some at least of the Democritean atoms; or it can be unique without being simple, like the legendary phoenix. But I will return to this point in discussing Part III.

Part III comprises five sections, together with a brief introduction in which Pannenberg states that although the early Christian theologians appear to take very different attitudes to Greek philosophy, none of them really escaped its influence; not even those who professed to repudiate it most strongly. On the other hand some of them were more effective at transforming and (one might say) biblicizing it than others. I accept this judgement, and no comment is needed.

It is otherwise with the first main section, headed 'Monotheism and Creation'. Here Pannenberg is concerned to show how 'the almighty freedom of the biblical God' was grasped by Christian theologians; he judges that 'early Christian theology was relatively quick and decisive in breaking through the confines of the philosophical concept of God and creating fitting room for the freedom of the biblical God' (p. 146 = 20/317). I believe there is a two-fold misrepresentation in this section; it both over-praises the achievements of the early Christian theologians and underestimates the positive help which they received from the philosophers. The main argument given for holding that they 'broke through the confines of the philosophical concept of God' is that they rejected the idea of matter as eternally coexisting with God and established the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. But this, we shall see, is not a distinctively Christian development; it has important precedents in the Greek philosophical tradition. A subsidiary point is that Irenaeus at least derived the creation from the contingency of the divine willing. He does indeed make this point, and the reference given to *A.H.* 2.10.4 could have been supplemented by 2.1.1 (sua sententia et libere fecit omnia) and 2.30.9; but the Platonists' understanding of God's βούλησις was closer to Irenaeus than Pannenberg will admit; he ignores the immensely important text in the *Timaeus* 41 ab, which was quoted as a commonplace by Philo (*quis rerum* 246), used by Justin (Dial. 5.4), and echoed by Athenagoras (leg. 6.2), not to mention the Epistle of James (1.18).[7]

[7] N.B. also the emphasis on God's βούλησις in Atticus, fr. 4, = Eusebius *P.E.* 15.6.1–17. Galen *de usu partium* xi.14 (discussed in R. Walzer *Galen on Jews and Christians* (Oxford, 1949), pp. 11ff., 23ff.) shows that the word was current in pagan discussions of Jewish cosmology.

Thus when Pannenberg describes Greek philosophy as an obstructive barrier to be broken through, he offers only a selective account of its achievements. We are told once again that 'the divine spirit always remained bound to a material principle' (p. 142 = 17/314), and there is a reference to 'the duality of effect and cause' (p. 143 = 18/315), which seems to be presented as a faulty premiss, which leads both to the conception of God and the world as a dynamic unity, as in Stoicism, and to the dualistic theories which sharply differentiate God and matter. It is not made very clear why the latter are objectionable, and how they differ from Pannenberg's own view; he cannot, surely, wish to condemn *any* theory which thinks of God as causing the world, while establishing a contrast between them? But at this point Pannenberg seems to be thinking not of God presented as a totally unknowable being, the culmination of his argument in Part I, but of the less extreme theory of a God conceived on the analogy of a human mind, a second explanatory principle coupled with matter.

He thus continues by stating that in Greek thought 'the concept of the origin (*archē*) was not kept reserved for the divine' (p. 143 =18/315) and goes on to refer to philosophers such as Albinus who distinguished three originative principles, matter, the ideas, and God; and he represents the notion of creation *ex nihilo* as an important and characteristically Christian development, admittedly with some Jewish antededents represented by 2 Maccabees; though Christians did not arrive at this notion immediately. Much of this is familiar ground; but it needs to be supplemented and corrected. Pannenberg himself notes the opinion that the divine mind is the source of the ideas, which reduced the number of originative principles to two; he fails to mention the Greek philosophers who argued that there can be only one. But this theory is already noted in Aristotle's *Physics* Book I,[8] he attributes it to Parmenides and Melissus, with a side-glance at the early cosmologists who thought in terms of material principles; and it is a natural outcome of Pythagorean theory, since the Pythagoreans taught that everything is derived from numbers, and numbers derive from the One.[9] In the first century BC we already find a theistic development of such theories which anticipates the Christian doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. Cicero condemns, and therefore knows, the theory that God created matter; see Lactantius *D.I.* 2.8.10; Eudorus defends it; see H. Dörrie's *Platonica Minora*, p. 306; and it is at least arguable that Philo, another Alexandrian, agrees.[10] It should be

[8] 184 b 15 ff. Note also the proof offered in *de Philosophia*, fr. 17, noted by Professor de Vogel, op. cit. p. 935, n. 20.

[9] See the neo-Pythagorean epitome preserved in Diogenes Laertius 8.25–35.

[10] Pannenberg's estimate of Philo's position (on p. 144, n. 82 as expanded in E.T.) is probably justified against Wolfson, on the basis of the texts he considers; but the contrary view is argued by R. Sorabji on the basis of his *de Providentia*, in *Time, Creation and the Continuum* (London, 1983), pp. 203–9.

noted that the phrase *ex ouk ontōn* is not in itself precise enough to define the Christian doctrine, since *ouk onta* can refer to things which have no definite being, a chaos or *tohu-wa-bohu*; or indeed to things which are not as they should be; Paul applies the similar phrase *ta mē onta* to despised Christian missionaries, including himself So the verse from 2 Maccabees is probably inconclusive On the other hand the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* in the full sense was enunciated by the Gnostic Basilides both earlier and with greater force than it was by any second-century orthodox theologian [11] I conclude, then, that Pannenberg seriously underrates the interest and value of Greek reflections upon God as *archē*

The second section of Part III is entitled 'God's Otherness and Spirituality' It raises the question whether any predicate, such as Mind, or Spirit, is adequate as a characterization of God's nature; this is more fully discussed in the following section For the present, Pannenberg's main contention is that the Greeks, and the Christian theologians who followed them, gave insufficient expression to God's otherness and spirituality, since they were dominated by the thought that God is other than matter, is spirit as opposed to matter Perhaps this could have been put more effectively by saying that the biblical contrast of the creator God and the created world was weakened because it was assimilated to the existing Greek contrast between mind and matter Pannenberg in fact suggests this in a ponderous sentence which refers to 'the spirit-body dualism of Platonic anthropology' (p 148 = 21/319)

The third section of Part III is headed 'God's Otherness as Incomprehensibility and Ineffability' Pannenberg begins by considering various reasons given by early Christian thinkers for the doctrine that God cannot be named; some are based on philosophical tradition, he thinks, some are not These two pages are perhaps not of the first importance, and can be passed over without comment; though the subject of naming crops up again at p 154 (26/323), where he remarks 'In every act of naming there is an element of seizing possession (Gen 2:19)' Perhaps this need not be taken too seriously; when the Almighty responds to Moses' request for his name (Exod 3:13–15) He is not inviting Moses to seize possession of Him! But in philosophical circles the importance of names lies mainly in the more or less unconscious assumption that a name should provide an exact and even an unique description of what is named; this assumption could remain powerful in theology, even though it was easy to find counter-examples in common life But this brings us to the important topic of God's incomprehensibility, which occupies the bulk of this section

'For Israel's faith, God is essentially hidden', says Pannenberg (p 154 = 25/325); 'not because he stays away from men, so to speak On the contrary

[11] Hippolytus *Ref* 7 21 1–4

God is hidden precisely in his historical acts', quoting Isaiah 45:15; this agrees with most English versions, including RSV, and with Luther; though I note that the New English Bible renders the verse 'How then cannot thou be a god that hidest thyself, O God of Israel?' But if God is essentially hidden, Pannenberg is quite consistent in approving the philosophical tradition which asserted God's incomprehensibility (the inconsistency we noted earlier lay in supposing that this was derived from, and still limited by, the 'method of inference'); consistent also in defending those Christian theologians like Justin, Irenaeus and Clement who made use of it; in fact he defends Justin against the criticism put by Roman Catholic scholars that he placed an 'exaggerated emphasis on the transcendence of God' But Irenaeus and Clement at least are not approved without reserve; they made the mistake, he thinks, of regarding our incomprehension of God 'simply as a provisional ignorance that could be set aside by revelation' (p 155 = 26/324); Irenaeus, thus 'took a fateful step in the direction of a compromise which was actually impossible from the standpoint of philosophy as well as that of theology' (p 157 = 27/325), a 'two-level structure' which led towards Latin scholasticism; though it seems that on Pannenberg's showing Irenaeus believed that our natural ignorance of God was to be corrected by divine revelation; whereas the normal scholastic view was that our natural knowledge of God was to be completed by it

What then is Pannenberg's own view? Since God is *essentially* incomprehensible to men (author's italics), even divine revelation must disclose precisely this fact; thus 'only in view of God's presence in the destiny of Jesus can man endure the incomprehensibility of God and thus even in the face of the truth of God be truly man' (p 156 = 26f /324) This is impressive; but it seems to me to be existentialist rather than Christian, even if it has some basis in Marcan christology; for it seems to imply that Jesus was mistaken in teaching his disciples to address God as their heavenly Father, or in declaring plainly to the Samaritan woman that God is a spirit If God is *essentially* incomprehensible, then all attempts to explain his nature, even by analogy, must be misleading; and it is strange to find Pannenberg appearing to desert the sober and biblical profession of faith in God the Father Almighty for the sophisticated and Catholic *Quicunque Vult* with its demand for belief in 'One Incomprehensible'!

Let me throw out a few suggestions about the incomprehensibility of God Since God is an absolute, it seems fitting to describe him in absolute terms; it sounds patronizing to say that we don't know very much about him But if there is any truth in Christianity, we must know something; otherwise, *inter alia*, we should lack any moral guidance; for all we knew, God might be like Kali, and intend that Christians should strangle unsuspecting travellers And it not enough to say, with some of the ancients, that we can have merely negative knowledge, and say what God is not; this will either be a mere linguistic

substitution, e.g 'God is not unrighteous', Hebr 6:10, or it will faii to tell us what we need

A possible way out is to observe that in our ordinary discourse we require that statements made to us should be not only true but proportionate. Suppose I tell you that the distance from London to Manchester is more than four inches. This in perfectly true, but could well be misleading; if you understand English but know no geography, you may be surprised to learn that it is as much as a mile. Our present problem, of course, is not so simple; it is not a matter of incomparability in a single dimension. It is that, if we try to describe God at all, we have to use predicates which also apply to finite beings, and which we have learnt to use in these contexts How then can we avoid reductionist suggestions?

The ancients, I believe, were often handicapped in this regard by an 'all-or-nothing' theory of knowledge, treating 'knowledge' as a word which properly applies only to perfect or complete knowledge, and assuming that a statement cannot really be true unless it states the whole truth (For the former point, N.B Plato's treatment of knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) in *Republic* 5, 476 ff , and cf Aristotle's doctrine that actual knowledge is identical with its object [12]) But no one can state the whole truth about God; therefore, it seemed, nothing could truly be said about him.[13] I am inclined to think, indeed, that this mode of thought is still with us, in the use, or perhaps the misuse, of what is called 'the paradigm case' We argue thus: the paradigm case of statements such a 'X is wise' is a statement like 'the Vice-chancellor is wise'. But God is not comparable with the Vice-chancellor Therefore it makes no sense to say that God is wise

But this argument makes the stultifying assumption that our language does not allow of being stretched and adapted to new cases; on which assumption there could have been no development of civilized and expressive language at all Inventing new words is a rather sophisticated business; reapplying old ones is the procedure that originally made man capable of abstract thought.

The classic theory of reapplication in theology is of course the doctrine of analogy. This has come under criticism as suggesting a sort of proportion sum which we have not the means to work out: God's wisdom exceeds man's wisdom in proportion as God's being exceeds man's being But what proportion is that? Is it perhaps enough to reply that it is not our business to work out proportion sums in relation to God? God is wise beyond our understanding; this is our faith; and it is a faith which can be sufficiently defined by hard-headed reasoning to have some definite content

We may start by noting that some of our concepts are truly open-ended. A

[12] *De anima* 3.5, 430a20; 3.7, 431a1; cf 3.8. 431b22

[13] Minucius Felix *Octavius* 18: *magnitudinem Dei qui se putat nosse minuit: qui non vult minuere non novit*

simple and instructive case is that of the predicates 'hot' and 'cold' These look like symmetrical opposites; but scientists assure us that things cannot be cold beyond a certain degree, at which all motion stops; but there is no limit which restricts their heat. Hence if I say 'X is hot' I need not be taken to imply that X is comparable to a cup of tea, or to Rome in July

In this example – and indeed in the doctrine of analogy – we are still thinking in terms of a single scale of measurement. The case of God's wisdom is more complex To say that God is superlatively or transcendently wise will not explain the forms which God's wisdom will take. But we should not expect to know this. Pannenberg introduces the notion of God's contingent action in order to 'protect' the otherness of God against the possibility that his essence could be inferred from his actions (p 171 =37/336f). But I doubt if it is needed; even granted that we can sometimes identify an event as an act of God (or as embodying an act of God) we can never understand all the reasons for it, or determine what part it plays in the complex strategy of divine love But we can 'see through a glass, darkly' And since Pannenberg himself makes positive statements about God, he must surely agree that God's 'incomprehensibility' should not be taken to mean that our knowledge of God is zero. It is a rhetorical way of pointing to riches and resources beyond our comprehension.

We come at last to the long and complex fourth section of Part III, with its by now familiar heading 'The Consequences of the Method of Causal Inference'. The section begins with a reference to proofs of the existence of God in connection with Romans 1–5. Pannenberg claims that St Paul stands outside the cramping influence of the inferential method, in that he presents man's natural knowledge of God not as a human achievement but as a divine judgement But early Christian theologians failed to follow Paul's lead; at certain points they broke free from the constraints of the inferential method; at other points they were forced into 'a constriction of the biblical idea of God, an abridgement of his transcendent freedom and omnipotence' (p 158 = 28f/327). One might perhaps compress the argument of the two following subsections in these terms:

(a) the philosophical concept of immutability does not do justice to the biblical notion of God's faithfulness;
(b) the philosophical concepts of simplicity and absence of properties do not adequately express God's otherness and transcendence

The pages devoted to subsection (a) seem to me the best in the whole paper. I may perhaps quote the following lines: 'The concept of immutability rightly says that God is no originated and transitory thing But immutability says too little, since God not only immovably establishes and maintains reality in its lawful course, but has within himself an infinite pleni-

tude of ever new possibilities in the realization of which he manifests the freedom of his invisible essence' (p. 161 = 30/329). Pannenberg goes on to point out that the concept of divine immutability leads on to Pelagian errors amongst others; for 'If God is immutable, then surely every change in man's situation in relation to salvation must be initiated by a change from a man's side' (p. 163 = 31f./330).

In general, if not in every detail, I warmly welcome these pages; and I must not be taken to criticize them if I add two reflections on the philosophical reasoning involved:

(i) Ancient reflections about immutability were much influenced by a passage in Plato's *Republic* 2, 380–381, which Pannenberg does not mention. Plato argues that if a god changes, he must either suffer change from an outside influence, or else change himself. But being *ex hypothesi* perfect he cannot change himself for the better; nor of course for the worse. Therefore he cannot change at all. The argument that God is incapable of improvement becomes a commonplace; it was used, for example, by the not very philosophical Athanasius in controversy with the Arians; and if accepted, I think it would exclude Pannenberg's concept of God's freedom, as 'having within himself an infinite plenitude of ever new possibilities'; since any act of God in history brings God himself into new relationships with his creatures. The concept of divine immutability thus requires to be complemented by that of predestination; the whole course of world history is determined in every detail, and its actual development adds nothing to God's experience, but is only undergone by the human participants. God knows eternally that an individual must undergo temptation *x* at time *t*; but he cannot know that the individual will undergo it or has undergone it, since to God it makes no sense to say 'It is now time *t*, and he is undergoing it now'.

Thus if we accept the Platonic argument, the biblical concept of God's freedom has to be sacrificed. But need we accept it? It seems to me to rest on an over-simplified concept of goodness and badness; if you like, it fails to distinguish between perfection and the measure of perfection. If God does something new, say by creating man, this does not mean that God's previous existence was imperfect; but its perfection was capable of enlargement, in that he accepted new responsibilities and a new stance as creator. For Plato, of course, any conception of this kind was ruled out by his preoccupation with timeless and mathematical realities as the standard of perfection.

(ii) For this reason, immutability was conceived primarily as resistance to decay or other changes for the worse. But even this resistance was misconceived as a purely static obstruction. Plato, in the passage I have mentioned, uses the argument that well-made articles like good clothes do not wear out easily, and healthy bodies are not prone to disease; good characters also resist temptation. But a well-made cloak is not immutable in the way an equilateral triangle is immutable; it is useless unless it can flex with its wearer's movements. And a healthy body does not remain passive in the face of fatigue or infection; though Plato could not have known this, it adjusts itself to the danger, secretes lactic acid, breeds antibodies, and so on. And of course immutability is not a sufficient recipe for either prudent or Christian conduct; it excludes response to divine grace and to particular inspirations.[14]

I have thrown out these suggestions in the briefest possible form; I am well aware that much remains to be discussed.

The argument of subsection (b) may perhaps be summarized as follows:

(i) 'The immutability of the first cause leads to the thought of its simplicity';
(ii) If God is conceived as simple, he has to be conceived as incomprehensible and indeed without properties (so the E. T.) or qualities, *apoios*;
(iii) This, again breaks the connection between God's essence and his action; since an action without properties is inconceivable.

Pannenberg's criticisms of this structure of thought are mainly directed at point (iii); there is a brief glance at point (ii) on p. 172 (= 36/337), where he says that the link between simplicity and absence of properties in only valid if one takes a realistic view of universals; a previous page, 169 = 36/335, suggests that he is referring to the tough requirement that a valid definition should have a structural correspondence with the thing defined; human beings, e.g., consist of rationality combined with animality; cf. Aristotle *Metaph.* 7.10–12. But point (i) is merely announced. I think this is a pity, because arguments on this point are often vitiated by a very simple fallacy. Ancient thinkers frequently assume that there is a straightforward opposition between what is simple (ἁπλοῦς) and what is composite (σύνθετος); hence one can prove that a thing is simple merely by showing that it is not composite. But this is clearly false; a tree, for instance, is not composite in the sense of having been assembled from pre-existing parts, like a house; but neither is it simple, since it consists of distinguishable parts like roots, a trunk and branches; and these develop by differentiating themselves out of the relatively simple acorn or other seed.

Moreover, if it is false that all complex beings arise from the assembly of their parts, it is probably also false that all decay and corruption are caused by

[14] Cf. my remarks in H. Dörrie's Festschrift *Platonismus und Christentum*, edd. H.-D. Blume and F. Mann (Münster, 1983) p. 252.

their separation If a house collapses, it is not usually the case that the various bricks and timbers simply come apart; the process will usually begin when the timbers begin to rot and the bricks to soften and crumble Can one then trace the softening and crumbling to a more intimate separation of the minute particles? No doubt one can; but the ancients were certainly not in a position to *prove* that simple bodies such as atoms cannot merely pass out of existence; modern science, after all, tells us that they can be transformed into energy, which is then simply dissipated; still less could they prove (against Plato, *Timaeus* 41a) that a thing can exist eternally only on condition that it is immutable, and therefore simple Are we not ourselves promised eternal life?

Pannenberg's discussion gives an important place to Irenaeus, and contains the arresting sentence 'For Irenaeus, the concept of God's simplicity means that the fullness of all perfections and properties is realised by him in the mode of unity' (p 167 = 34/333) One would have liked to see this idea further developed; failing this, I would assume that Irenaeus' concept of divine unity is a remarkable but not particularly original one which is clearly traceable back to Xenophanes [15] But Pannenberg goes on to explain that if God is really simple, *no* properties can be ascribed to him 'insofar as every attribute is what it is only in distinction from another' (ibid) True, God is sometimes described as *apoios* merely in the sense that he lacks *sensory* qualities, like the human mind; but the more radical conclusion is justified: 'the simplicity of God requires that he be conceived as propertyless' pp 169 = 36/335) And he continues, 'Awareness of the otherness of God apparently reaches its highest pinnacle with the drawing of this conclusion But this sort of otherness does not express his unforeseeable action; it is not the otherness of his freedom' This leads on to the conclusion that God must be seen as operating contingently, as acting freely, which is repeated with great force in the concluding section five

It has been a difficult task to describe and criticize a complex and influential article within the limits of a single paper Perhaps it may make for clarity if I end by restating my criticisms in the baldest possible summary:

(1) Pannenberg argues that a single method of inquiry, the 'method of inference', runs through all Greek philosophical theology It leads both to the conclusion that God is part of the natural order and (surprisingly) to the doctrine that God is incomprehensible Pannenberg does not seem to reject the notion of God's incomprehensibility as such; but he claims that as conceived by the Greeks it tends to depersonalize and deactivate God; it masks the notion of God's free creativity

Comment: (a) The theory of a single philosophical method is over-

[15] See my *Divine Substance* pp 187–9

simplified; (b) Pannenberg's notion of God's free creativity is arresting, but goes far beyond anything realized by early Christian theologians; (c) Pannenberg treats the hiddenness of God as an absolute; even though it is closely connected with specific acts in history, it is an essential fact about him, not one that revelation can remove But his treatment seems to rule out *any* positive teaching about God, even though he claims that God is not 'propertyless' We could reply that revelation *does* enlarge our knowledge, even though it also increasingly reveals our ignorance

(2) Pannenberg claims that the Fathers were justified in appealing to Greek philosophy because of the support it gave to monotheism

Comment: (a) This is by no means true of all Greek philosophy; (b) Greek speculations about unity brought in concepts quite foreign to the Bible

(3) Pannenberg claims that the early Fathers were relatively successful in breaking through the philosophical assumptions about God as a generalized cause and asserting his free creativity

Comment: This is inadequately supported, and also wrongly assumes that the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* is a Jewish or Christian coinage

(4) Pannenberg rightly criticizes the philosophers' tenet of divine immutability; he fails to note weaknesses in the arguments for immutability

(5) Pannenberg gives qualified support to the theory of divine simplicity, as highlighting God's incomprehensibility, but notes that it ends by making God 'propertyless' Once again he is uncritical in accepting arguments in favour of simplicity

(6) Some doubt must persist as to the coherence of Pannenberg's view that God 'confronts men in the personal mode' but, on the other hand, is *essentially* incomprehensible', 'essentially hidden', and 'hidden precisely in his historical acts' This is a rhetorical way of making a valid point; if understood at all literally, it makes any theology impossible

Let me end, then, with two general observations; one on the form of Pannenberg's argument, the second on his theology:

(1) We are told that the Christian Fathers were partly successful, but not wholly successful, in 'remolding' the philosophical conception of God so as to do justice to the biblical conception of a God 'who out of his otherness effects the new and contingent,[16] and is thus the personal Lord' (p 180 = 43f /343f) But what is the status of this 'biblical conception', as Pannenberg presents it? Its roots in the biblical tradition are

[16] The German seems to require the rendering 'and is contingent

undeniable; but it does not echo the biblical tradition as it was understood by the rabbis, or by the Christian Fathers, or as it might have been explained by the biblical writers themselves. It owes something to Bultmann, something to Harnack, something to Luther, something to the schoolmen, and much more to the Greek philosophers themselves. It is their labours that have enabled us to extract and refine this concept of God's freedom and otherness and his shaping of history from the vast and varied complex of biblical material. It is from them that we derive the key concept of critical revision; one could have explained this idea to Plato or to Aristotle; one could have made it intelligible to Origen or to Augustine, and just possibly to Irenaeus. It would have meant nothing at all to the writers of the Bible.

(2) Arresting and valuable as Pannenberg's theology proves to be, there are some expressions which give rise to misgivings; and among them I would place the notion of God's contingent action. It has this to be said for it, that if God acts in history, and history includes contingent events, including the decisions of human free will, then God adapts his action to contingent events. It also points to God's power of acting in new, unforeseen and creative ways. But it tends to mask the complementary notions that God's actions flow appropriately from his own nature, and that they are also appropriate to the moment in the historical process to which they are directed. There is a complexity here which cannot be grasped by either of the conventional alternatives 'necessary' and 'contingent'. When Pannenberg says that God's action is contingent, he does not mean that it is arbitrary. But when Plotinus, for instance, says that it is necessary, he does not mean that it is forced.

To generalize this comment: the drawback of this concept of God's contingent action is that it expresses God's power mainly in relation to our own ignorance of the inner logic and appropriateness of his action. It is better, then, to talk of his freedom and his creativity. In the same way, the notion of God's otherness contains an important lesson; but it suggests strangeness and alienation, which are notions relative to our human condition; it needs to be corrected by the more positive and absolute concepts of God's fullness, mystery, and depth. If we believe that it is God's will to bridge the gap that separates infinite from finite being, the Christian preacher can never give priority to the claim that God is a scandal. He must affirm that God is love.

III

Marcel Richard on Malchion and Paul of Samosata

Two third-century crises have long attracted the attention of scholars: the controversy between the two Dionysii, and the trial and condemnation of Paul of Samosata: Luise Abramowski has offered us a novel and carefully argued approach to the former, but will, I trust, be content with a more pedestrian approach to the latter. Our main source for this is of course Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History; but he tells us much less than we could wish. He describes the events that led up to Paul's condemnation and reproduces part of the Synodal Letter written to justify his deposition. This letter certainly contained a description of Paul's theology and of the proceedings against him, since Eusebius tells us that the writers "make manifest to all their zeal, and also the perverse heterodoxy of Paul, as well as the arguments and questions that they addressed to him; and moreover they describe the man's whole life and conduct" (H E VII,30, translation by Lawlor and Oulton, 1927). But the passages actually quoted enlarge on Paul's "life and conduct", ignoring his theology, apart from the passing remark that he "strutted about in the abominable heresy of Artemas"; and Eusebius' own comments in effect repeat this, agreeing that "he espoused low and mean views of Christ ... namely that he was in his nature an ordinary man".

Can we supplement this information? A fairly extensive dossier of texts purporting to reproduce Paul's teaching, and indeed to derive from the acta of the Synod of Antioch, can be collected from fifth- and sixth-century writers, beginning in 429 with Eusebius of Dorylaeum, who wished to represent Nestorius as reproducing the heresy of Paul. A good collection of this material was published by Henri de Riedmatten in 1952, building on earlier works by Bardy

and Loofs.[1] De Riedmatten argued that the fragments he printed are authentic. I have always thought that he made a good case. But some notable scholars were not convinced;[2] and their doubts were increased by Marcel Richard in 1959.[3] Amongst other arguments, Richard proposed a new translation of a crucial passage in Eusebius (H.E. VII,29) which had seemed to support the authenticity of the fragments. As commonly rendered, this passage asserted that Malchion, Paul's accuser, "had stenographers to take notes as he held a disputation with Paul, which (disputation) we know to be extant even to this day". Richard argued that the alleged "stenographers" were actually "informers", who did not "take notes" but rather "gave evidence", presumably of Paul's *previous* actions or teaching. And he offered other arguments to suggest that the supposed fragments derive from Apollinarian forgeries, a literature with which he is extremely well acquainted.

Richard's arguments have been accepted by a number of distinguished scholars, including J.N.D. Kelly (1977), A. Grillmeier and R.L. Sample (both 1979), F.W. Norris and H.C. Brennecke (both 1984) and R.P.C. Hanson (1988). Others have appeared unconvinced, including R. Lorenz (1979), T.D. Barnes (1981), W.H.C. Frend (1984) and R.D. Williams (1987).[4]

But the whole question has been reopened in a masterly article by Manlio Simonetti.[5] He examines the vocabulary of the "fragments" in detail, and thus developes and greatly strengthens de Riedmatten's claim that they exhibit archaic features which fit naturally into a third-century context, but which a post-Nicene

[1] Les Actes de Paul de Samosate (Paradosis 6), Fribourg/CH 1952. G. Bardy, Paul de Samosate (SSL 4), Louvain ²1929. F. Loofs, Paulus von Samosata etc., TU 3rd series XIV, 5, Leipzig 1924.

[2] Notably Bardy in his review of de Riedmatten, RHE 41 (1952) 643 ff., retracting his earlier acceptance of them. See also H. Chadwick, JThS 4 (1953) for a cautious approval of de Riedmatten.

[3] M. Richard, Malchion et Paul de Samosate. Le témoinage d'Eusèbe de Césarée: EThL 35 (1959), reprinted in his Opera Minora 2 (Louvain 1977), no. 25.

[4] J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines, London ⁵1977, 159; A. Grillmeier, Jesus der Christus im Glauben der Kirche I, Freiburg ²1981, 297; R.L. Sample, ChH 48 (1979) 18-21; F.W. Norris, JThS 35 (1984) 51f.; H.C. Brennecke, ZNW 75 (1984) 274; R.P.C. Hanson, The Search for the Christian Doctrine of God, Edinburgh 1988, 72. On the other side see R. Lorenz, Arius Judaizans?, Göttingen 1980, 128-35; T.D. Barnes, Constantine and Eusebius, Cambridge 1981, 144; W.H.C. Frend, The Rise of Christianity, London 1984, 394 no. 117; R.D. Williams, Arius, London 1987, 159f. 305 no. 27. These authors ignore Richard, though Williams refers to Norris.

[5] M. Simonetti, Per la Rivolutazione di Alcune Testimonianze su Paolo di Samosata: RSLR 24 (1988) 177-210.

forger would not think of reproducing; other known and admitted forgeries in fact make no attempt to avoid the language of what they regard as contemporary orthodoxy.

Simonetti followed this article with a shorter paper devoted to a review of Richard's own arguments.[6] Here again I accept his conclusions; but I think it possible to amplify and improve his criticism of Richard. I have neither the time nor the space to reopen the main question; but the more modest task I have mentioned may still be useful, and may help to throw light on an obscure but important episode in the history of doctrine.

We begin, like Richard, by considering the crucial passage from Eusebius H.E. VII,29,2: μάλιστα δ' αὐτὸν εὐθύνας ἐπικρυπτόμενον διήλεγξε Μαλχίων . . (30 words omitted) οὗτός γέ τοι ἐπισημειουμένων ταχυγράφων ζήτησιν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐνστησάμενος, ἣν καὶ εἰς δεῦρο φερσμένην ἴσμεν, μόνος ἴσχυσεν τῶν ἄλλων κρυψίνουν ὄντα καὶ ἀπατηλὸν φωμᾶσαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

Richard argues as follows:

(1) The verb ἐπισημειοῦσθαι is a rare word, dating probably from the second century A.D. Although by etymology it derives from σημειοῦν (and so from the noun σημεῖον, one can add), it connects "quant au sens" with the adjective ἐπίσημος, "evident" or "well known". The verb should mean "to reveal" ("dévoiler"); it is balanced against εὐθύνας ἐπικρυπτόμενον above, and the same object εὐθύνας (acc. plur.) is to be understood; it can therefore be rendered "mettre en évidence" (pp. 326-8).

(2) It cannot refer to stenographers taking notes (the usual rendering as quoted above); such a procedure would be too commonplace to deserve notice (p. 327).

(3) The phrase ζήτησιν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐνστησάμενος cannot refer to a simple debate; it must indicate a formal process of trial ("enquête", p. 327; "enquête judiciaire", p. 330), at which indeed Paul may not even have been present (p. 326). The supposed parallel with Origen's debates with Heraclides and with Beryllus of Bostra is delusive, since these were amicable discussions with men of

[6] "Paolo di Samosata e Malchione. Riesame di Alcune Testimonianze", in: Hestíasis (FS S. Calderone), Studi Tardoantichi 1, Messina, 1-25.

good faith (p. 331). The use of ζήτησις in the singular helps to mark the distinction (pp. 330-3) Richard adds some observations on conciliar procedure which I shall leave on one side (pp 333-8).

(4) The common rendering of ἐπισημειουμένων ταχυγράφων rests on mistranslations of Rufinus and Jerome, both of whom mistakenly connected it with σημεῖον and wrote "excipientibus notariis" (pp. 329-30).

(5) Richard adds evidence to show the growing importance of "tachygraphes (excerptores, notarii, tribuni et notarii)" in the third and fourth centuries and their employment in responsible tasks apart from stenography (pp. 328-9). In this case, then, they acted as informers who "gave evidence" at Paul's trial; and it is this which Eusebius indicates by the phrase ἐπισημειουμένων ταχυγράφων

Such is Richard's case. But we perceive at once that it involves a certain inconsequence. Eusebius, he says, cannot have been referring to the presence of stenographers; this would have been taken for granted. But in this case, whatever Eusebius' words may have meant, stenographers were present! And this, coupled with Eusebius' reference to the survival of the trial records, is surely a point in favour of their survival into the fifth century, not against it?

As to the supposed antithesis between εὐθύνας ἐπικρυπτόμενον and ἐπισημειουμένων, Simonetti surely is right in objecting that the two verbs are too widely separated for this to be probable (Hestiasis, p. 10f.). But in any case there is a certain difficulty in translating the former phrase, which is not entirely clarified by Richard's "qui dissimulait", still less by Simonetti's "ch' era abile a nascondere le sue prevaricazione" (RSLR, p. 179). Εὐθύνας, which I agree in taking as an accusative plural noun, cannot refer to Paul's "prevarications", but to something which he opposed; either the investigations, or the resultant accusations directed against him. The phrase must mean either that Paul was *obscuring* the evidence against him, or (with a slightly unusual sense of ἐπικρύπτεσθαι) that he was *evading* the accusations that ensued. For this sense of εὔθυνα cf. Eusebius, H.E. III,10,8.

We pass to consider Richard's first point, on the word ἐπισημειοῦσθαι. By and large we can admit that the verb is uncommon. Richard gives a list of its occurrences, to which I can make a few additions; but some important insights

can be gained by paying attention to the noun ἐπισημείωσις, which is surely good evidence for the meaning of the verb.[7]

My list is as follows:

Pagan authors:

Diogenes Laertius 7,20 = SVF 1,308 (the noun)

Anonymus Londiniensis (1st century A.D.) 21,21.

Plutarch, Apophth. Lac. 55,2,235c Bernardakis.

Aspasius, In EN (CAG 19,1), three refs.: pp. 101,1; 139,6; 165,33.

Alexander of Aphrodisias, In SE (CAG 2,3) p. 145,29.

Sextus Empiricus 5,68

Christian authors:

Irenaeus, Haer. I,8,2 (SC 264, 117-120 Rousseau).

Hippolytus, Haer. IV,50,2 (the noun).

(Ps. Hippolytus fr. 26, noted in PGL (=Lampe, Patristic Greek Lexicon), is probably to be discounted, as its authorship and date is uncertain; see GCS I,2,150, 12 Achelis.)

Origen Cels. 4,12 (GCS I,282,9 Koetschau)

Hom. Ier. 14,5 (GCS III,110,25 Klostermann), cf. Jerome, PL 25,666B

Comm. in Joh., five refs.: II,28,171; VI,60,307; X,19,114; XIII,17,104; XIII,62,436; plus the noun at X,40,274

M. Perp. 17 (Acts of the Christian Martyrs, Oxford 1972, 124 Musurillo).

Africanus, Chron. 13, 1, reproduced in Eusebius P.E. X,10,2

Eusebius, D.E. VIII proem. 12; IX,4,2; plus the noun at V,11,3.

H.E. VI,24,3 (the noun) and VII,29,2 quoted above.

The verb exhibits a fair variety of senses, which itself suggests that it was not exceptionally rare. Let us begin by making a concession to Richard, who argues that it was felt to be cognate with the adjective ἐπίσημος. This is in fact confirmed by the passage in Hippolytus noted above: ἰδίως οἱ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς

[7] Cf. Richard, 327 n. 5

ἐπισημειώσίν τινων ἄοτρων ὀνόματα οὕτως ἐκάλεσαν, ἵνα αὐτοῖς ἐπίσημα ᾖ, "men gave individual names to distinguish certain stars, to make them distinct". Africanus (l. c.) may possibly have felt the same, but this is less probable, since 43 words intervene to separate ἐπίσημοι ... ἐπισημειούμενος.

In other cases, I shall argue, the connection with the noun σημεῖον is unmistakeable. The original sense of the word must be "to take notes", whether in shorthand or otherwise. Thence there is an easy transition to the sense "observing" (in English, from "taking notes" to "taking note"; in German from "Notizen machen" to "Notiz nehmen"). This is clearly the sense in Sextus Empiricus 5,68: εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀποβλέπων ἐπισημειοῦται τὸ ἀνίσχον ζῴδιον, "he watches the sky and observes the constellation as it rises", and in the Martyrdom of Perpetua, ἐπισημειώσασθε τὰ πρόσωπα ἡμῶν ἐπιμελῶς ἵνα καὶ ἐπιγνῶτε ἡμᾶς ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ: "take note of our faces"; there is no question of "revealing" them ("dévoiler"). In Eusebius, D.E. VIII proem. 12 we find the closely connected sense of "pointing out", "calling attention to": τὰς εὐαγγελικὰς φωνὰς ἐν πρώτοις ἐπισημειωσάμενοι. Hippolytus' πρὸς ἐπισημιείωοιν is rather similar; and Plutarch speaks of an audience "recognizing" or "marking" some behaviour by applause: τῶν δὲ Πανελλήνων ἐπισημειωσαμένων κρότῳ τὸ ἔθος. There is no need to follow Cobet and "emend" the text by substituting the more familiar word ἐπισημαίνεσθαι, for ἐπισημειοῦσθαι is used by Plutarch's near-contemporary Aspasius, and should be allowed to stand.

Probably the commonest sense is that of "pointing out" a fact or situation, just as in English one can "observe" or "remark" that something is the case, even though not directly visible; ὅτι follows it in Aspasius and Origen, and it occurs intransitively with περὶ at Origen, Comm. in Joh. XIII,62,436. Finally, it is used with an impersonal subject, where some event or tradition "indicates" some further fact, as in Irenaeus, haer. 1,8,2: Καὶ τὰ πάθη δὲ αὐτῆς, ἃ ἔπαθεν, ἐπισεσημειῶσθαι τὸν Κύριον φάσκουσιν ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ "it was her sufferings (viz. those of Sophia) which, they say, the Lord indicated on the Cross". This, I think, is the nearest we come to Richard's required sense of "revealing" something that at first sight lies hidden; but there is a clear distinction between this and the

commonest sense of ἐπισημειοῦσθαι, which is that of pointing out what might otherwise escape notice.

My list began with Diogenes Laertius 7,20 = SVF 1,308: [Ζήνων ἔφη δεῖν] τὸν ἀκούοντα οὕτω πρὸς τοῖς λεγομένοις γίγνεσθαι ὥστε μὴ λαμβάνειν χρόνον εἰς τὴν ἐπισημείωσιν. This can only mean "the hearer should be so absorbed in the discourse itself as to have no time for taking notes". We cannot of course be sure that Diogenes is giving Zeno's exact words; but it is at least possible that ἐπισημειοῦσθαι was used in this sense in the third century B.C., long before it appears in Plutarch and the Anonymus Londiniensis of the first century A.D. Apart from this passage it is not easy to find confirmation for the sense of "taking notes" which is suggested for Eusebius, H.E. VII,29,2. But another passage from the same work may be relevant. At VI,24,3, discussing the places where Origen wrote his various books, Eusebius tells us that the ten books of Stromateis were written at Alexandria ὡς καὶ τοῦτο ὁλόγραφοι δηλοῦσιν αὐτοῦ πρό τῶν τόμιων ἐπισημειώσεις. The word ὁλόγραφος can hardly mean "written in his own hand", as Lawlor and Oulton translate it, if LSJ is right in noting that this sense appears much later. It should mean "written out in full" (so PGL = Lampe, cf. p. 5). But why should Eusebius say this? The preface to the several volumes of a published work would hardly be written in short-hand. But if ἐπισημείωσις were commonly used to indicate short-hand notes, it would be natural to insert ὁλόγραφος to show that this sense was not intended.

But the chief evidence for the sense is of course the independent testimony of Rufinus and Jerome, who use the phrase "excipientibus notariis", which indisputably refers to the taking of short-hand notes; Rufinus in his translation of Eusebius H.E. VII,29,2, Jerome in his notice of Malchion, closely based upon Eusebius, in de viris illustribus 71. Simonetti has already rejected Richard's contention that they simply mistook the sense of the word: "it is hard to think that two, so to speak, professional translators, who had lived long years in the East, knew Greek less well than Richard".[8]

[8] RSLR 24 (1988) 181, repeated almost verbatim in ST 1,11

I agree with this judgement, and submit that my examination of the word goes far to confirm it. In particular I will make three points:

(1) Although my list, compiled from easily accessible indexes, is not markedly longer than Richard's (for writers down to Eusebius he gives 10 instances, discounting Plutarch, I give 20, besides an additional 4 to the noun ἐπισημείωσις) my list is strengthened for precisely those authors which Rufinus and Jerome are bound to have read; 7 + 1 for Origen, 3 + 2 for Eusebius, as against 2 in each case.

(2) My list includes Origen's Fourteenth Homily on Jeremiah, which Jerome translated. At the relevant point our only Greek manuscipt reads ἔπει ἐσημειωσάμεν, but Jerome clearly read ἐπεσημειωσάμεν, which he translated, quite correctly, as "annotavimus"; and his reading has been adopted by the editor, E. Klostermann, for the GCS text. The sense of "observing", "taking note", which we have seen is frequent in Origen, is obviously close to that of "taking down notes" which Jerome and Rufinus give to the word in connection with Malchion.

(3) Richard's interpretation of ἐπισημειοῦσθαι presumes that both Rufinus and Jerome wholly overlooked its connection with the simple verb σημειοῦσθαι and the analogous compound ὑποσημειοῦσθαι. The simple verb occurs not very seldom in both Origen and Eusebius. Clement of Alexandria uses the noun ὑποσημείωσις. And both it and the verb ὑποσημειοῦσθαι are indisputably used in the sense of "taking notes", the noun at Diogenes Laertius 2,122, the verb at 2,48;[9] cf. also Origen, Cels. proem. 6.

I have devoted some space to a modest, though necessary, philological task. Let me conclude with a few more general observations.

(1) Richard suggests that Paul may not have been present at the final Council which pronounced his deposition (pp. 336,337 and no. 25); the notice at H.E. VII,30,19 that Aurelian referred the question to the Bishops of Italy and Rome might suggest that he thought the authority of the Council diminished by Paul's absence. A hasty reader would infer that if Paul refused to present himself, the

[9] Richard himself refers to these passages, cited by chapters as 2,13. 2,6 at 330 n. 9, noting correctly that there can be no question of stenography in Xenophon's time, but does not deny that they refer to taking notes.

texts which profess to reproduce a dialogue between him and Malchion (esp. frr. 22,36) must of course be spurious. But this conclusion by no means follows. It would be quite natural at the Council to give evidence of Paul's opinions by citing the records of earlier debates, the λόγοι καὶ ζητήσεις of H.E. VII,28,2. Indeed it would be more effective to quote such statements, made in the presence of witnesses, than to rely on the testimony of Richard's "informers".

(2) Richard, as we have seen, attaches great importance to the use of the single word ζήτησιν, used he thinks to signify the "enquête judiciaire" conducted by Malchion at H.E. VII,29,2, as distinct from the double plural λόγοι καὶ ζητήσεις καὶ διαλόγους, H.E. VI,33,2, cf. § 3. Obviously, if Paul were not present, there could be no reference to a dialogue. But Richard goes to great lengths to deny any analogy with the case of Beryllus, or with the recently discovered conversations between Origen and Heraclides. No doubt there is a difference, in that these two conversations ended in agreement; and a further difference if Paul refused to attend the final Council. But there seems to me a touch of naïvetée in Richard's unquestioning acceptance of Eusebius' estimate of Paul (p. 331): "Bérylle et Héraclide étaient de bonnes évêques, qui enseignaient de bonne foi une doctrine erronée et ne songeaient pas à s'en cacher. Paul de Samosata, au contraire, se dérobait devant les accusations portées contre lui et le problème était de prouver l' objectivité de ces accusations". Only Malchion succeeded " à prendre l' accusé en flagrant délit (φωρᾶν)", ibid, cf. VII,29,1-2, φωραθείς, φωρᾶσαι. Does Richard mean, after all, that Paul compromised himself *at the Council*? This would not follow, since Eusebius can use φωρᾶν quite generally of an accusation proved by written argument, e.g. E.T. I,20,40; III, 3,47. But what concerns me more is that Richard's account of the events makes no allowance whatever for any polemical bias on the part of Eusebius when he speaks of Paul's "duplicity". We should not overlook the possibility that Paul's accusers were simply puzzled; they were convinced that his teaching was unacceptable, but could not identify it with any of the heresies which they

already recognized This technique is familiar enough,[10] and can be seen in Eusebius himself, who generally brands Paul as an adoptianist and Marcellus as a Sabellian, though sometimes arguing that the latter's theology, per contra, makes him a Paulianist.

(3) A much better account of Paul is given by Eusebius in the Ecclesiastical Theology 1,14 If I read him right, he recognizes four separate heresies and distinguishes Paul's teaching from that of Sabellius, from adoptionism, and from the theology of Marcellus: (1) Sabellius teaches one sole Godhead (§1) but identifies the Father with the Son (§3); (2) the "Ebionites" confess one God and do not deny the Saviour's body (i.e. bodily reality) but fail to recognize the Son's divinity; (3) Paul, *although he teaches that Jesus is the Christ of God*, and confesses one Almighty God like Marcellus, was condemned because he did not confess that Christ was both Son of God and God before his generation in the flesh (καί τὸν Σαμοσατέα δέ, καίπερ Ἰησοῦν τὸν Χριστὸν τοῦ θεοῦ εἶναι διδάσκοντα, θεὸν τε ἕνα τὸν ἐπὶ πάντων ὁμοίως ὁμολογοῦντα Μαρκέλλῳ, τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλότριον ἀπέφηναν οἱ ἐκκλησιαστικοὶ πατέρες, ὅτι μὴ καὶ υἱὸν θεοῦ καὶ θεὸν πρὸ τῆς ἐνσάρκου γενέσεως ὄντα τὸν Χριστὸν ὡμολογεῖ). Sabellius' heresy, however, involved the Father, not Christ; and (4) Marcellus "apparently in the same case as he was"[11] defines God and his Logos as one, while granting him the two titles "Father" and "Son".

The account given of Paul agrees well with the fragments (Christ, frr. 6.7.9.11.26; not pre-existent, frr. 2.3.26 etc.) and is far more plausible than Eusebius' usual caricature, which indeed recurs at E.T. 1,20,43 It suggests that Eusebius may have been prompted to re-read the acta of the Council, possibly as a result of his previous controversy with Eustathius (Socrates, H.E., I,23f.). Eusebius' efforts to tax Marcellus with admitting a human soul in Christ (E.T. 1,20,41.45) might well be a "left-over" from this earlier controversy, for Eustathius

[10] See my paper 'Rethorical Method in Athanasius': VigChr 30 (1976) 121-37, reprinted in my Substance and Illusion in the Christian Fathers, London 1985, no. VIII, esp. 131-3, where I show that these techniques were widely practised.

[11] The Greek is τὰ ἴσα δ αὐτῷ ὑπιδόμενος Μάρκελλος παθεῖν, where ὑπιδόμενος must be understood as a passive: '(rightly) suspected of the same fault"; the middle voice would translate, improbably, as 'suspecting that he himself was in the same case'.

certainly recognized such a soul (frr. 15,17 Sp.) whereas there is no direct evidence that Marcellus did so. But if Eusebius looked up the acta around 330 A.D., it becomes easier to suppose that they were used by the homoeousian party in 358-9;[12] at all events we have gone some way towards closing the gap between 268 and 429. - So much by way of tentative positive suggestions as an appendix to my main demolitionary task.

Dormitat Homerus! Richard at his best is so superbly perceptive as well as learned that his less distinguished performances have carried a conviction they do not deserve. Scholars who have accoustomed themselves to dismissing de Riedmatten's case will not easily be persuaded to change their views. But I submit that Richard's attempt to discredit it must be pronounced a failure. Paul of Samosata can once again emerge from the shadows.

[12] So Simonetti, RSLR 24 (1988) 182

IV

ARIUS IN MODERN RESEARCH

THERE is no need to argue the crucial importance of the Arian controversy in the early development of Christian doctrine, and much new light has been thrown on its history in recent years. Yet the motives and intentions of Arius himself are still disputed. I have taken the opportunity to reconsider them in a fairly non-technical style, reproducing a lecture generously commissioned by the University of Mainz. I shall consider three subjects: our evidence for Arius' doctrine; the main intention of his theology; and his relation to earlier thinkers. I will make some introductory remarks on each of these points.

1. Arius' writings have not survived *in extenso*. Our knowledge of his thought depends on three sources.

(*a*) We have letters written by Arius, which differ notably in their occasion and their emphasis. The earliest, Optiz *Urkunde* 1, is a short note written to an influential friend, in which Arius complains that he has been unjustly treated by his bishop, Alexander, and sets out some points of disagreement. The next, *Urkunde* 6, is a respectful approach to Alexander in which Arius explains his theology in more accommodating terms, apparently in the hope of securing toleration. The third, *Urkunde* 30, is a short credal statement addressed to the Emperor Constantine, which avoids all controversial points. The first two letters were written *c.*320 A.D., the third, I believe, *c.* 333;[1] it resulted, of course, in the Emperor's withdrawing the condemnation imposed on Arius by the Council of Nicaea. A few phrases from a fourth letter are quoted by Constantine; see Opitz *Urkunde* 34.

(*b*) We have some remains of the *Thalia*, a composition in verse in which Arius presents his theology in forcible terms. The first seven lines are quoted by Athanasius in his 'First Oration against the Arians', published perhaps *c* 340 A.D., some twenty years after the poem was written. Twenty years later again Athanasius quoted some forty-two lines in his work *De Synodis*, along with other Arian documents. This, I believe, is valuable evidence.

(*c*) There is a great mass of material in the form of reports and criticisms of Arius' doctrine by Alexander and especially by Athanasius. It includes two letters written in the name of Alexander and numerous summaries by Athanasius, all phrased in roughly similar terms. The most influential of these has been the report, based on the *Thalia*, which Athanasius presents in his

[1] See Annik Martin, *RHE* 34 2 (1989), 319 n. 2, against Opitz (327)

'First Oration', chapters 5 and 6. Not all of this report is reliable. It includes quotations, or alleged quotations, from the writings of Arius and of his colleague Asterius. But these are interspersed with hostile comments, and we also hear of remarks thrown off in conversation by unnamed Arian partisans. Scholars in the past have been far too ready to treat all this evidence as equally valid. In particular, they have preferred the indirect evidence of Athanasius to probable quotations from Arius, who is a heretic.

2. Arius' chief theological interest, it has long been supposed, was to uphold the unique dignity of God the Father, especially in comparison with the divine Logos. Alexandrian theology at this time was pluralist; it insisted that the Second and Third Persons of the Trinity were real and substantial beings, and not mere energies or functions of the Father. Alexander followed Origen in holding that the Logos was eternally generated from the Father; he differed from Origen in ascribing to him equal dignity and power. Arius rejected both these doctrines. To make the Logos coeternal and equally divine, he thought, was to preach two Gods; the Logos must be seen as junior, as radically inferior and subordinate to the Father. This view is strongly expressed in Arius' first letter and in the *Thalia* fragments.

Nevertheless Arius expresses this doctrine within certain limitations. He describes the Logos, in Isaiah's words, as 'a mighty God'. Although junior to the Father, and created by him, the Logos was called into being before all creation and executed the Father's creative work. So much is repeatedly disclosed by Athanasius.

But Arius appears to have been inconsistent. He emphasized the lesser dignity of the Logos by pointing to human limitations which he underwent as incarnate in Jesus: suffering, uncertainty, the need for decision, and the like.[2] It might seem that a Logos who was, next to the Father, the supreme architect of the universe should *eo ipso* be wise and powerful and proof against human weakness. Nevertheless Arius, or some of his followers, described the Logos as, in important respects, subject to our infirmities; the opposing party seized on these admissions, and complained that he considered the Logos a mere man, no more than a man.

It was this side of Arius' doctrine that was taken up by two American scholars, Robert Gregg and Dennis Groh.[3] In their view the main concern of Arius was not to subordinate the Logos to the Father, but to offer a distinctive approach to salvation. The

[2] R. Lorenz, 'Die Christusseele im arianischen Streit', *ZKG* (1983), 1–51; 36 n. 198 citing Urk. 30 2; 34 14, 32; also much indirect evidence.

[3] R. Gregg and D. Groh, *Early Arianism, a View of Salvation* (London, 1981).

Arian Logos, they think, is conceived as a morally perfect man, subject to our human limitations, and showing us by his example how those limitations can be overcome. This view has met with some criticism; but it has been given a cautious welcome by Dr Rudolf Lorenz. He has expressed it in the pregnant phrase 'Arius ist Isochrist'.[4] He does not mean, of course, that Arius was the equal of Christ; nor indeed that he claimed to be so. He means that, in Arius' view, men are capable of attaining equality with Christ; and this entails, conversely, that Arius assigns no greater dignity to Christ than a perfect man could attain.

3. Lorenz agrees with Gregg and Groh that Arius' main interest lies in Christology; and he seems to accept their view that Arius' Christology is an adoptionist one, '*adoptianistisch*'.[5] These points are associated with a distinctive view of Arius' antecedents. Lorenz holds that Arius' doctrine of the Logos is influenced by Origen's teaching on the soul of Christ, rather than by Origen's Logos doctrine itself. Furthermore, he believes that Arius stands in a line of tradition which derives from Paul of Samosata.[6] Both these suppositions lend support to the view that Arius teaches an adoptionist Christology.

I have described these points very briefly, as I mean to return to them later. For the moment I will say that the suggestion about the soul of the Logos is most interesting and suggestive; but it involves complications which Dr Lorenz may perhaps have overlooked. But to present Paul of Samosata as a forerunner of Arius is an idea which, I must confess, I believe to be totally misconceived.

I now return to my first topic, our evidence for Arius' theology. Scholars in the past have relied on the testimony of Athanasius and Alexander, and Lorenz followed them in his fascinating book *Arius Judaizans?* written in 1979. He exhibited this testimony in a system of eight headings, which has been widely adopted. Since that time he has done me the honour of giving careful attention to an essay of mine in which I put forward a very different view.[7] In fact I have entered this discussion with three principal contributions.[8] My essay of 1976, 'Rhetorical Method in Athanasius', attempted to show that Athanasius was not objectively reporting facts for the benefit of future historians; he was engaged in a bitter

[4] 'Christusseele' 3, cf. 41 n. 250.
[5] Ibid. 3, cf. 40 f., 48.
[6] R. Lorenz, *Arius Judaizans?* (Göttingen 1979) 128, cf. 'Christusseele' 48.
[7] See n. 2.
[8] *Vig. Christ.* 30 (1976), 121–37; *JTS*, NS, 29 (1978), 20–52; ibid. 39 (1988), 76–91.

controversy, and was not above using the polemical devices allowed by the conventions of his time. If misrepresentation served his turn, he would misrepresent. A second essay of 1978, on the *Thalia*, claimed that our best information on that work is the extracts preserved in Athanasius *de Synodis* 15, to which I will return. Most recently, in 1988, I argued that one of the letters attributed to Bishop Alexander, beginning Ἑνὸς σώματος, is in fact the work of Athanasius. This also affects Lorenz's argument, since he could claim that on some points the testimony of Athanasius is confirmed by that of Alexander. But their agreement is much reduced if we admit that only the longer letter, Ἡ φίλαρχος, was actually composed by Alexander. Lorenz cites it much less, and its agreement with Athanasius is indeed much less close. The linguistic arguments for my view, I still think, are irrefutable; if some scholars have been sceptical, it is mainly because my view conflicts with a common view of Athanasius' activity, namely that he wrote nothing until after he became bishop in 328; whereas I present him as writing an important dogmatic letter at the age of little more than twenty; in Charles Kannengiesser's words, I make him a sort of theological Mozart!

Accordingly, next to the letters of Arius himself, our most reliable source is the *Thalia* fragments of *de Synodis* 15. We have some forty-two lines written in rather crude verse. I was wrong in trying to identify their metre as anapaestic; since then Professor M. L. West has described it as Sotadean, which agrees with Athanasius' remarks in the 'First Oration' and elsewhere.[9] But a metrical structure, whatever it be, suggests that Arius' text has been preserved without substantial change. I myself see these lines as a sequence of disconnected fragments; Athanasius has in fact selected those lines which give an opening to criticism, so that almost all of them correspond to objections which he has developed elsewhere. It is most unlikely that Arius could have written a theological poem in which every line was offensive to orthodox sentiment; but if there were inoffensive lines, it would suit Athanasius' purpose to omit them. What then was the extent of the original poem? We have no means of knowing. If pressed for an answer, I would consider it unlikely that it was less than 100 lines or more than 500; but I must emphasize that this is mere conjecture.

The doctrinal importance of this finding is that the *Thalia* fragments provide a check on Athanasius' testimony, particularly in the 'First Oration', chapters 5 and 6, which has long been taken

[9] *JTS* 32 (1982), 98–106.

to be the best source. At one point it is completely confirmed: Arius does indeed, in his own words, proclaim the inferiority of the Logos and his substantial unlikeness to the Father in just the way that Athanasius condemns; though no doubt he also praised the Father in lines which we have lost.[10] At another point Athanasius is clearly at fault; Arius describes the many ἐπίνοιαι of the Son in terms which resemble Origen's; the ἐπίνοιαι are functional titles of dignity. But Athanasius treats these ἐπίνοιαι as mere fictions or pretences, an interpretation of the word which is possible in itself but entirely unjustified in this context. It is a disconcerting thought that Athanasius insists on an interpretation which will later be found in Eunomius, whereas Arius agrees with St Basil. In general, one might summarize the position by saying that Athanasius has slightly, but persistently, exaggerated the extent of Arius' unorthodoxy. No apology can turn Arius into a Christian Father. But he is nothing like the villain that tradition has made of him; and at certain points, where he made unwise pronouncements, he was later willing to retract them.

But can my reading of the *Thalia* be confirmed on critical grounds? I am not aware that there was widespread dissent from my 1978 paper. Nevertheless there are two scholars at least who hold strongly dissenting views, which I will attempt to discuss.

First, my greatly respected friend Charles Kannengiesser maintains the traditional view that our prime source for Arius' teaching is the 'First Oration', chapters 5 and 6; but he has proposed an entirely novel explanation of the *de Synodis* material.[11] He sees it as an artistic composition displaying a unified structure, which I myself cannot detect. It seems to me to contain a number of fresh starts and unexplained transitions, as was observed long ago by Bardy,[12] and as I have already agreed.[13] As to its content, Kannengiesser thinks that it is a reformulation of the original *Thalia*, made shortly before Athanasius wrote the *de Synodis*, by a writer who was moving towards a neo-Arian position. This view, I believe, is wholly disproved by metrical considerations. The original *Thalia* was composed in verse, as Athanasius reports. But the version of it presented in his 'First Oration' is almost entirely unmetrical. It must therefore have diverged to some extent from

[10] Cf. Urk. 6.2; Alexander, Urk. 14.46.

[11] C. Kannengiesser, *Holy Scripture and Hellenistic Hermeneutics* (Berkeley California, 1982), 14–20; R. C. Gregg (ed.) 'Arianism' *PMS* 11 (1983), 59–78; E. Lucchesi and H. D. Saffrey (eds.) *Memorial A. J. Festugière* (Genève, 1984), 143–51.

[12] *Lucien*, 255–7.

[13] *JTS* 38 (1987), 199–201.

the original text. Yet we are told that a later writer both reformulated Arius' verses with a new theology in mind and reintroduced the original metre. Whether he based his work on the original text or on Athanasius' paraphrase, such a procedure defies belief.

Kannengiesser's account might perhaps be thought more acceptable if taken in conjunction with the analysis of the 'First Oration' itself proposed in his *Athanase, Évêque et Écrivain*, which suggests that chapters 1–10 are a later addition, composed perhaps in the 350s (op. cit. p. 402). This would make them roughly contemporaneous with the major works in which Athanasius cites a number of documents *verbatim*. And the solitary appearance of ὁμοούσιος at i.9 could be simply explained on the hypothesis of a later date. But, as I have argued when reviewing the book in this journal (36 1 (1985), 226 f.), the subtraction of chapters 1–10 (with 30–34 and parts of Book ii) does not leave a convincing remainder.

Kannengiesser argues for his redating of chapters 1–10 on the ground that their content is not discussed in the later chapters, which are mainly concerned with Asterius. But this fact, I think, can be simply explained without resorting to theories of dislocation. If the 'First Oration' appeared, as we agree, during Athanasius' Second Exile, it would be natural for him to begin writing with the Alexandrian situation in mind and make Arius his principal target. But before long he was at Rome in the company of Marcellus, who had provoked a furore by his attack on Asterius; in fact this work, and the replies by Eusebius of Caesarea, were a major cause of strained relations between Rome and the East. Asterius' theology therefore must have been actively debated at Rome, as well as Marcellus' attack, and Athanasius' shift of objectives is thereby explained.

Secondly, Dr Rudolf Lorenz has done me the honour of subjecting my 1978 paper to very careful discussion; he treats it, indeed, with respect, besides offering valuable corrections. Yet for all its acuity and learning, his paper shows signs of piecemeal composition. He begins by stating his view of Arius, using the traditional material and the well-known eight headings. He then deals very fully with my critical work, and accepts some of my arguments; but this does not lead him to reconsider the rather conservative account of Arianism that he has previously given. His conclusion is presented in notably moderate terms: 'Athanasius' reports contain important information, which should not be disregarded. Arianism is not an invention of orthodox polemics; and Arius is not to be bracketed with Eusebius of Caesarea.' But this sentence leaves important truths unsaid

Athanasius' information is of course important and would be indispensable if we had no better sources by which to correct it. But at certain points, I have argued, we have better sources, which enable us to detect the element of misrepresentation that runs through so much orthodox polemics, and so come closer to the real Arius. Dr Lorenz's impressive construction is not fully reliable because it uses material for which, unfortunately, such correctives are lacking. I agree, of course, that Arius made provocative claims which Eusebius avoided; but neither of them was wholly consistent or wholly intractable. The comparison is introduced, presumably, because Lorenz thinks I have been too kind to Arius. But he surely will not claim that I have been careless in scrutinizing the evidence?

This account must suffice; it cannot be stretched to include a detailed discussion of texts. We turn, then, to the remaining topics, the intentions of Arius and his antecedents.

Here Dr Lorenz makes the following four points.

1. Arius derives his view of the Logos from Origen's teaching on the *soul* of the Logos, rather than the Logos himself.
2. In Origen, this soul gains divine status by adoption.
3. Arius in the *Thalia* declares that the Son was adopted.
4. This is confirmed by Alexander's report (Urk. 14 35 f.) which links Arius with Paul of Samosata.

It may be convenient to begin with a remark on the term 'adoptionism', since Lorenz has attributed this view to the Arians. English scholars spell the word with a second 'o', 'adoptionism', so that it has no apparent connection with the heretical Adoptiani like Elipandus. In practice it suggests that someone attains a status which is not his by nature through his own moral effort and achievement. It seems that the German term *Adoptianismus* gives much the same impression. But a higher status need not be gained by adoption; some men became Roman emperors simply by seizing power on the strength of their military prestige. Conversely, if adoption takes place, it need not be a response to recognized merit. Normally, of course, it will take place on the double ground of merit in the past and promise for the future. But adoption where there is no promise is possible; one might in sheer pity adopt a hopelessly difficult child. Adoption on performance only is also unlikely; yet a king might adopt an honoured counsellor, say, on his deathbed, so as to cheer his last hours with the thought that his children would enjoy royal honours. The normal situation is adoption *ex praevisis meritis*, rather as Samuel judged that David would make a good king.

But if the essential point is that someone attains divinity by

his own effort, we need a better term; in English we might perhaps speak of 'promotionism', in German perhaps of *Verbesserungstheologie*; this would correspond with Athanasius' accusations that Arius conceived Christ's goodness in terms of προκοπή and βελτίωσις. I think there must be some truth underlying these charges; but we cannot be sure, since at this point there is no first-hand evidence to provide a check on the opponents' reports. What can be said with some assurance is that it is most unlikely that Arius thought of salvation exclusively in exemplarist terms. Almost all Christian thinkers employ a variety of concepts and symbols to interpret the mystery of our salvation.[14] An Arius who relied on one alone is hardly a credible figure.

Let us turn, then, to the suggestion that Arius' view of the Logos derives from Origen's treatment of the soul of Christ. Lorenz provides a very careful and well-documented study, which cannot be fully considered in this paper; but I will summarize it as follows.

1. For Origen, this soul, like other souls, is a created being; though its creation must be seen as a timeless condition.
2. Like other souls, it has free will, and can act either for the better or the worse.
3. But the soul of Jesus consistently adheres to the Logos in love, and so becomes totally fused with him in one spirit.
4. This soul therefore receives all the honorific titles that originally belonged to the Logos.
5. The Logos assumed this soul in order to become incarnate. But the Logos remains distinct, and is unaffected by the human emotions that attach to his soul.
6. This soul's persistence in well-doing is held out to mankind as an example for us to follow.

Dr Lorenz then argues, in a much briefer paragraph, that Arius' teaching reproduces the pattern just set out.

I find this argument impressive and largely convincing. Nevertheless there are some reservations that need to be made.

1. Origen's account is not as consistent as Lorenz makes out. In some contexts he emphasizes the total fusion of the soul of Christ with the Logos; they become 'one spirit', they need not be separately named, and so on. Elsewhere, he draws clear distinctions: the soul is an instrument of the Logos; the soul is passible,

[14] In some unpublished notes I have summarized Athanasius' salvation doctrine under some twenty headings. Exemplarist teaching is widespread. For Origen, see *Princ.* iv.4 4, p. 354–26. For Athanasius, *EF* 2.5, 10.7, *Ep. Marc* 13 (of Christ's earthly life); also c. Ar. iii.20 (ὑπογραμμός from 1 Pet. 2: 21) of Christ's unity with the Father.

the Logos impassible.[15] Moreover, Origen is unclear as to the moment at which their union takes place. In the *de Principiis* ii.6.3, in Rufinus' translation, it takes place *principaliter*; Lorenz paraphrases it 'von Anfang der Schöpfung an hängt sie unzertrennlich dem Sohn Gottes an', etc.[16] But in c. Cels ii.9 it is united 'after the Incarnation'. How then was it before? Was it not yet in being, or not yet obedient?

There is a complication here. Origen holds that our actions are free, but yet are fully foreseen by God. I do not myself think this conjunction is possible; but for the moment let us accept it. It does not then follow that a good action eternally foreseen by God ensures unchanging goodness. It might be negated by another action which God equally foresees. But *undeviating* goodness foreseen by God is quite another matter. There is no uncertainty here which needs to be dispelled. It may be that Athanasius has missed this point. He argues, absurdly I think, that on the Arian view the Saviour did not become Logos until he had performed the good works which secured his divinity.[17] This is like saying that David did not become king until he had succeeded in ruling wisely, as Samuel foretold.

2. Some of Origen's assumptions are clearly not shared by Arius, a fact which counts against Lorenz's emphasis on his dependence. Arius clearly did believe in God's total foreknowledge; this plays an important part in his conception of the Son's moral condition, as free in principle but undeviating in fact. He clearly did not believe in the eternity of God's creative action, and of the creatures themselves. Time is part of the order of creation, and outside the temporal order such words as 'before' and 'after' become obscure and uncertain in their application. Nevertheless Arius insists on asserting the priority of God over his creatures, including even his Son, who is prior to all time, yet ἀχρόνως γεννηθεὶς ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρὸς ... οὐκ ἦν πρὸ τοῦ

[15] Origen seems to hold both (i) that the soul of Christ is by nature like other souls, and so permanently distinct from the Logos, and (ii) that its moral union is unshakeable, so that it is permanently united. For (i): it is created by the Logos, *Princ.* i.7.1, Lorenz n. 208. By nature intermediate: flesh/spirit, *Co. Rom.* i.7.45; flesh/deity, ibid. i.7.55, *Princ.* ii.6.3. So can do good or evil, *Princ.* ii.6.5, Lorenz n. 226, 235. Not by nature God, *Cels.* ii.9 init., cf. *Princ.* ii.6.5. Doesn't change its (created?) essence *Cels.* iv.18. For (ii): It is united to God by its free choice, *Princ.* ii.6, iv.4.4 (354.13), *Cels.* v.39; but its obedience has become second nature, *Princ.* ii.6.5; it is so fused that it need not be distinguished or separately named, *Cels.* vi.47, *Princ.* iv.4.4 and fr. 37; it is in substance divine, *Princ.* ii.6.6. For the notion of acquired substance or 'second nature' see my *Divine Substance* p. 148 n. 18.

[16] 'Christusseele' 38.

[17] C. Ar. i.38.

γεννηθῆναι.[18] Here Lorenz very perceptively points out observations by Origen which do not square with his general picture, but are not unlike Arius' opinions.[19]

3. There is one obvious objection to Lorenz's view. Arius plainly believed in the pre-existence of the Logos, though not in his eternity; this is shown by his literal acceptance of Prov. 8: 22. But he cannot have believed in the pre-existence of souls. For Peter of Alexandria is known to have attacked Origen's doctrine at this point, and Athanasius repeats his condemnation.[20] If Arius had accepted that doctrine, it is surely inconceivable that Athanasius should have missed the opportunity to condemn him.

If is of course a common opinion that Arius did not acknowledge *any* soul in Jesus. But I do not rely on this opinion. Our only firm evidence for it is a statement by Eustathius of Antioch.[21] But Arius must have found some means of interpreting the New Testament passages which refer to Christ's soul. He could well have accepted Origen's dictum: 'When Scripture wishes to indicate any suffering or trouble that affected him, it uses the word "soul", as when it says "Now is my soul troubled"', and so on. Origen thus dissociates the Logos from suffering. Athanasius carries this process further, and assigns the Lord's sufferings to his 'flesh'. He could thus complain that the Arian exegesis of such texts associates the Logos too closely with suffering; he does not, and presumably could not, complain that the Arians fail to grant the Logos a soul.

To summarize: Arius' doctrine of the Logos was indeed influenced by Origen's views on the soul of Christ. But one must not suppose what a careless reading of Lorenz might easily suggest, that he simply adapted Origen's teaching. He plainly diverges at a crucial point, over the pre-existence of souls in general; and he has no concern to insulate the Logos from suffering. The truth is rather that Origen expressed a number of sharply divergent views; Arius adapted some and rejected others to form his own synthesis.[22]

I shall deal rather briefly with Lorenz's third point. He detects an act of adoption in the well-known couplet from Arius's *Thalia*:

ἀρχὴν τὸν υἱὸν ἔθηκε τῶν γεννητῶν ὁ ἄναρχος
καὶ ἤνεγκεν εἰς υἱὸν ἑαυτῷ τόνδε τεκνοποιήσας.

[18] *Urkunde* 6.4.

[19] 'Christusseele' 38 n. 223. On time see R. Williams *Arius* p. 122 nn. 55, 56; also 'Christusseele' 38 n. 218 ref. *Princ.* ii.9.1 p. 164.1, ἐπινοουμένη ἀρχή.

[20] Peter: Leontius of Byzantium *c. Monoph.*, Fr. in Routh *Rel. Sacr.* iv.50. Athanasius *ad Epict.* 8, *Vit. Ant.* 74.

[21] Fr. 15, de Riedmatten p. 100. It was of course upheld by some later Arians.

[22] So Lorenz, 'Christusseele' 38 n. 223.

Argument naturally arises on two points: does τεκνοποιεῖν mean 'to beget' or 'to adopt'? And does the couplet refer to two separate divine acts, or to a single act with a double description? Lorenz thinks that the first line denotes the begetting of the Son, and the second refers to a subsequent act of adoption [23] But this interpretation is directly contradicted by a phrase in Arius' letter to Alexander, *Urkunde* 6.3: the Son received from the Father his life and being and his dignities, which the Father brought into being simultaneously with him, τὰς δόξας συνυποστήσαντος αὐτῷ τοῦ πατρός. Of course theologians can be inconsistent, as I have shown; but I doubt if Arius would have contradicted himself at this vital point in a carefully phrased dogmatic letter.

There remains the question of Paul of Samosata We may start from some acknowledged facts. Lucian was highly regarded by Arius and his sympathizers. Lucian is described as a successor of Paul by Alexander of Alexandria; though this report lacks confirmation. Arius is portrayed by Athanasius as sharing the errors of Paul, but we have no surviving statement by Arius in his favour.

My difficulty in following Dr Lorenz is that at a crucial point Arius seems to have agreed with Paul's accusers, rather than with Paul himself. Certainly we must not make the mistake of thinking that, whatever his accusers believed, Paul always took the opposite view There are, in fact, several points of agreement. Paul's accusers apparently held a pluralistic theology resembling that of Dionysius of Alexandria. Paul agreed with them to the extent of making the Logos a distinct personal being, identifiable with the divine Wisdom, and substantially distinct from the Father. The main point of difference was that the accusers held that the divine Wisdom was substantially present in the man Jesus, or essentially united with him. Paul complained that this was equivalent to making the two identical, so that the human sufferings of Jesus impinge directly on the divine Wisdom. He himself drew a sharp distinction between the divine Logos and the man born of Mary; yet he protested that he had an adequate concept of their union, which avoided the error of making them identical. The man Jesus was not pre-existent; on the other hand his coming was foreseen and appointed by the Father

But this sharp distinction between the Logos and the man is wholly foreign to Arius' thought If we think that he used the human sufferings of Christ to prove the inferiority of the Logos, this argues something like a substantial union between them; we

[23] Better in R. Williams *Arius* p 102, n 40

have shown that he did not use the soul, or the flesh, of Christ as an effective barrier between them; this is the truth underlying Eustathius' complaint. But the lack of an adequate distinction also explains the fact that it was possible to misrepresent Arius as a follower of Paul. One of them appeared to believe in a man guided merely by external inspiration; the other in a passible Logos too much entangled in human limitations. Both then were accused, though on totally different grounds, of making Christ a mere man.

I have had to present Paul's opinions briefly and dogmatically, in a form appropriate to a lecture. I have consulted the texts as presented by de Riedmatten, which I believe to be authentic, though no doubt selective.[24] And I have tried to avoid some common misconceptions. I remember my pupils at Oxford asking me whether I thought Paul an adoptionist or a Sabellian. The answer I should have given is that these are not true alternatives; but both are polemical statements which are extremely remote from the facts. Paul no doubt attached importance to the human acts of Jesus, instead of making him a mere mouthpiece of the divine Wisdom. But he did not make him simply an inspired man. Paul's Wisdom figure is a substantial being, she has a dignity which must be upheld, she dwells in the man Jesus as in a temple. Once these facts are admitted, the charge of Sabellianism also collapses.

Where then does Lucian fit into the picture? Here I am less certain; but I will make a suggestion I start from the following facts. Arius regarded Lucian as a respected teacher Next, the views of the Lucianist party show some resemblance to those of Paul's accusers. But the contemporary bishops of Antioch, Philogonius and Eustathius, are opposed to the Lucianists, though they are not, of course, prepared to defend the memory of Paul. At some time, then, there must have been a reversal of theological tradition at Antioch. But we do not hear of any break in the episcopal succession. It may be, therefore, that Bishop Domnus, who succeeded Paul, was not an outright opponent, but an uncontroversial figure calculated to appeal to moderate men on both sides. This would explain why the ambitious and influential Paul left behind him no strong body of sympathizers, but only a quite insignificant group of Paulianists

[24] For a telling defence see M. Simonetti 'Per la Rivalutazione di alcuni Testimonianze su Paolo di Samosata', *RSLR* 24 (1988), 177–210. He criticizes M. Richard's attack on the reliability of the fragments, in 'Malchion et Paul de Samosate, Le témoinage d' Eusèbe de Cesarée', *Eph Theol Lov* 35 (1959), 325 ff. I hope to reinforce this criticism; see H C Brennecke *et al* (edd.), *Logos, Festschrift für Luise Abramowski*, Göttingen 1993, 140–50

36

As for Lucian, if he really was excommunicated for the duration of three episcopates, his fall must have taken place very soon after Paul's expulsion. We may see him, then, as an uncompromising pluralist, strongly *opposed* to Paul, who was condemned because he refused to accept the policy of peace and accommodation. By representing him as a successor to Paul, Bishop Alexander means no more than that he was the next prominent troublemaker.[25] Alexander needed to gain the support of Eustathius and his allies, who would not altogether approve of his pluralistic Trinity, with its barely-concealed doctrine of three hypostases; so he takes the opportunity to dissociate himself from two teachers whom Eustathius is sure to dislike. But we need not accept his insinuation that the two agreed with each other.

In arguing this case, I have diverged a little from my principal theme. My purpose has been to argue that the traditional estimate of Arius is the right one. His main concern was to uphold the unique dignity of God the Father in the face of attempts to glorify the Logos, as he thought, unduly. This interest is abundantly attested in his surviving fragments. It is allowable, if rather strained, to say that his main interest was Christology. But the idea that he was mainly concerned to propound an exemplarist theory of salvation finds little or no support in his surviving fragments. I venture to think that we have seen the end of a most interesting episode in the history of Arian scholarship; and that after Dr Lorenz no scholar of equal distinction will come forward to support this theory.

[25] I agree with Bardy (*Lucien* 48) in seeing Lucian as an opponent of Paul, and in not pressing the sense of Alexander's διαδεξάμενος (*Urkunde* 14 36) to indicate a formal succession (*Lucien* p. 51 n. 66); but I see no need to imagine two Lucians, which would rob Alexander's remark of its point in seeking to discredit a teacher revered by his Arian opponents.

V

Was Arius a Neoplatonist?*

Dr. Rowan Williams is highly respected both as a theological scholar and as a master of Christian spirituality; he has added to his distinction by accepting the Bishopric of Monmouth; he is moreover a personal friend, who has done me the honour of dedicating to me his book on Arius[1], published in 1987 and widely regarded as the best overall study of that much maligned theologian. It is therefore with some hesitance that I undertake to criticize a theory propounded in that book, namely that Arius was influenced by Neoplatonist thinkers, including Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus, besides Anatolius and others. I must appeal to Proverbs 27:6 'Faithful are the wounds of a friend', recalling Aristotle's painful resolve to criticize his friends' convictions (*N.E.* 1.6). It is unnecessary to add that Dr. Williams himself is a splendid exemplar of controversy conducted with courtesy and impartial judgement.

The book was foreshadowed by an article published in the *Journal of Theological Studies* for April 1983, pp. 56-81, entitled 'The Logic of Arianism'. The two presentations agree in the main; and a reference to the article made early in the book (p. 31) may be quoted as an introduction to Williams' thesis, as it is entirely typical of his blend of cautious assertion with bold theorizing. 'Likewise', he writes, although (Arius) is described as a skilled dialectician[2], we cannot with confidence reconstruct a philosophical education. If he was, as has been argued' — in the article, of course — 'indebted to certain currents in revived Aristotelianism and Iamblichus' version of Neoplatonism, he could have encountered such teaching in Syria around 300, when Iamblichus himself was teaching at Antioch and Apamea'. This, however modestly propounded, is a startling hypothesis; it suggests that Arius, whose philosophical education is considered uncertain, consulted Iamblichus, whereas his contemporary Eusebius, who is well known as a student of Greek philosophy, never even mentions Iamblichus either in his *Praeparatio Evangelica* or in any other work that I can discover.

* Part of this paper has already appeared in a Spanish version in D. Ramos-Lisson et al. (edd.), *El Diálogo Fe-Cultura en la Antiguedad Cristiana* (Pamplona, 1995), the record of a symposium held there under the auspices of the Faculty of Theology. I am most grateful both for their generous hospitality and for permission to print.

[1] *Arius. Heresy and Tradition*. By Rowan Williams (London, 1987).

[2] The evidence is late: Socrates, *H.E.*, 1.5, Sozomen, *H.E.*, 1.15. Perhaps more significant is Constantine's reference to his profession of belief 'worked out in bold and extremely detailed terms', σοβαρῶς πως καὶ μᾶλα ἀκριβῶς ἐξησκημένα, Opitz *Urk.* 34, § 8.

The article puts forward three points in favour of Neoplatonic influence on Arius, each of them based on a phrase to which he took exception. The first, at p. 58, turns on the description of the Son as 'integral to his Father's substance', τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας ἴδιος, which in Arius' opinion as Williams presents it would reduce the Son to a mere impersonal property or attribute. The second, at p. 63, springs from the phrase μέρος ὁμοούσιον, where Williams adduces a parallel in Iamblichus *de mysteriis*, illustrating the objectionable view that both Son and Father participate in a prior divine *ousia*, which thus would be divisible and negate the divine simplicity. This objection is well known; but the suggested parallel drawn from Iamblichus is new and surprising. The third point in the article, at p. 66, begins from Arius' protest against the doctrine that Father and Son are equal in rank, which he says would result in two ingenerate beings, δύο ἀγέννητα. Williams discusses this in relation to the concept of participation, μετοχή, as expounded by Aristotelian scholars; but I must postpone any detailed analysis.

The book does not reproduce the first two arguments that I have mentioned, though it refers to them[3] and makes it clear that Williams was prepared to uphold in 1987 the conclusions he had put out in 1983. In their place we find two new suggestions. The first begins with an excellent review of ancient theories of creation, and of the Son's role in it. Williams adverts to the term δυάς, the Dyad, as applied to the Son, and tries to explain it by citing numerological treatises by Anatolius and Iamblichus. I think this is far-fetched, and prefer simpler explanations. The second argument discusses the relation between God and his Logos, and in particular the Son's limited knowledge of the Father, with Arius' surprising comment that the Son does not know his own *ousia*, let alone the Father's. Here Williams finds a background in Plotinus' fifth Ennead; once again I remain unconvinced.

In the third place the book contains a chapter headed 'Analogy and Participation', which developes the third argument already presented in the article. We may say that Williams' argument for Neo-platonic influence on Arius is presented under five headings, and it will be convenient to discuss them in the following order: (1) and (2), the first two points from the article; (3) and (4), the first two points from the book; and lastly, the concluding point from both works, which correspond closely enough to allow of a single discussion.

(1) Williams begins by noting that Arius condemned the phrase ἴδιος τῆς οὐσίας, which he says was 'current in Alexander's circle' as applied to the Logos. It would, he says, present the Logos as an *idion* of the Father in terms of Aristotelian logic, and thus reduce him to a mere impersonal property. Williams names Porphyry's *Isagoge* as a likely source for this deduction, and adds the comment 'Given Arius' reputation for expertise in logic, it seems perfectly possible that he was familiar with the *Isagoge*'[4].

[3] Op. cit. p. 31, cf. 189–196, 223.
[4] *J Th S* n.s. 34 (1983), p. 60.

I agree that the phrase was current in Alexander's circle: but I do not think it originates with Alexander. It is not found in his surviving texts. Moreover Alexander seems concerned to minimize the *difference* between the Father and the Son while emphasizing the real distinction between them. They are τῇ ὑποστάσει δύο φύσεις[5], but the Son is exactly like the Father (ἐμφερής)[6], lacking only the attribute ἀγέννητος[7]. The epithet ἴδιος of course appears, notably in § 32 which cites Romans 8:32. But ἴδιος τῆς οὐσίας is especially characteristic of Athanasius, and consorts with his profoundly suggestive but much less logical view which recognize the distinctness of the Logos as Son but also makes him integral to God's being as his Wisdom. Alexander no doubt could accept such teaching; but his own emphasis is perceptibly different.

It seems to me, rather, that the phrase embodies a reaction against Arius' formulations, real or supposed; a reversal of Williams' explanation. Arius wrote in his *Thalia* the words: ἴδιον οὐδὲν ἔχει τοῦ θεοῦ καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἰδιότητος, an enigmatic phrase to which we must return. Alexander paraphrases this sentence in § 13 of his letter Ἡ φίλαρχος: οὔτε γὰρ φύσει υἱός τις ἐστι τοῦ θεοῦ, φασιν, οὔτε τινὰ ἔχων ἰδιότητα πρὸς αὐτόν, and the same charge is often repeated by Athanasius in looser and more polemical expressions, as in *c. Ar.* 1.6, ὁ λόγος ἀλλότριος μέν κὰι ἀνόμοιος κατὰ πάντα τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας καὶ ἰδιότητός ἐστιν. The words ἀνόμοιος .. τῆς ... οὐσίας read like a response to Arius' next following line οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐστιν ἴσος, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ὁμοούστος αὐτῷ.

So far I have been presenting a fairly minor disagreement with Williams on the origin of the phrase ἴδιος τῆς οὐσίας. The case is very different when I turn to his comments on the adjective ἴδιος together with its neuter form ἴδιον or τὸ ἴδιον; for his argument is gravely weakened by a failure to distinguish between them. On ἴδιος he writes as follows: 'The point is straightforward: divine properties are eternal and impersonal. Of course God 'has' σοφια and λόγος, but they are qualities belonging to his substance. Thus to say that the Son is ἴδιος to God is to reduce the Son to being an impersonal quality ... Arius, in short, is quite clear about the meaning of ἴδιος; it relates only to a quality predicated of a substance'. Williams then refers to Porphyry's *Isagoge*, where he says Arius could have found a discussion of the meaning of ἴδιος, 'making it abundantly clear that ἴδιος cannot be used of something which is a substance in its own right'; moreover a debt to Porphyry might account for Constantine's reference to the Arians as 'Porphyrians'[8].

Williams does not make it quite clear whether he himself accepts the extraordinary doctrine that he attributes to Porphyry and Arius. Of course ἴδιος,

[5] Letter Ἡ φίλαρχος, in Opitz *Urk.* 14, § 38; cf. §§ 15, 16, 52.
[6] Ibid. § 47; cf. § 38.
[7] Ibid. § 19; cf. § 47.
[8] *J Th S* 34, pp. 59-60; cf. Opitz *Urk.* 33.

being an adjective, does not ordinarily *name* a substance; but it is normally 'used of a substance' when it is *applied to* a substance; we need look no further than Romans 8:32, 'God spared not his own Son'; and the New Testament provides many other examples; in St Matthew alone we find 'his own city', 'his own country', 'his own field', 'his own slaves'. There is no evidence whatever that Arius would have rejected this usage.

Williams, then, has misled us by careless formulation. The adjective ἴδιος is essential to his argument, which begins from the phrase ἴδιος τῆς οὐσίας. But he assumes that Porphyry's use of it is dictated by what he says about its neuter form τὸ ἴδιον. He refers to Porphyry's *Isagoge*; but the connection with 'impersonal qualities' is made by turning to another work, where equality, τὸ ἴσον, is said to be an ἴδιον of the category of quantity[9]. This, I concede, is a quality: but if Williams had followed up the *Isagoge* passage a little further, he would have found Porphyry giving examples of the ἴδια of mankind, namely laughter, and turning grey-haired in old age. These appear to be, respectively, an activity and a passive affection: it would be a misuse of language to call them impersonal qualities.

Arius does in fact use the neuter form ἴδιον in the *Thalia* verse already mentioned:

ἴδιον οὐδὲν ἔχει τοῦ θεοῦ καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἰδιότητος
οὐδὲ γάρ ἐστιν ἴσος, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ὁμοούσιος αὐτῷ

I am not sure about the meaning of καθ' ὑπόστασιν ἰδιότητος. It might conceivably be used *metri gratia* in place of κατ' ἰδιότητα ὑποστάσεως, which would make good sense[10]. It seems to be an attempt to clarify the sense of ἴδιον. But it is plain that Arius objects to the term in this context for reasons almost exactly contrary to those deduced by Williams. Arius does not think it would degrade the Son by reducing him to an impersonal quality, but rather that it would honour him unduly by promoting him to equality with the Father. That is why he continues οὐδὲ γάρ ἐστιν ἴσος, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ὁμοούσιος αὐτῷ.

Our only other evidence for Arius' use of ἴδιος is found in his Letter to Alexander, § 2, where he states that the Father brought his Son into existence ἰδίῳ θελήματι, by an act of will, whatever impersonal qualities may have determined it. But Arius makes it abundantly clear in the same letter that he does not think of the divine properties as 'impersonal'. The Son was 'created by the will of God before times and ages, and received from his Father his life and being, and his glories, which the Father brought into substantial existence along with him', συνοποοτήοαντος αὐτῷ τοῦ πατρός. He adds that 'the Father gave him the inheritance of all things without depriving himself of his own unoriginate possessions' (ὧν ἀγεννήτως ἔχει ἐν ἑαυτῷ). But there must

[9] Porphyry, *Comm. on Arist. Categories*, CAG IV ed. A. Busse, p. 115.
[10] See e.g. Porphyry *Sent.* 33, p. 37.23 Lamberz.

be some force in this denial; and there would be no force at all if the items in question were mere impersonal attributes. If glories are to be inherited, they must be real and substantial.

Two further point before we close this rather long discussion. First, an Alexandrian writer could easily have based his use of ἴδιον on Clement, who knows Aristotle's *Topics* and conforms to its usage[11]; there is no need to appeal to Porphyry. And secondly, theologians can borrow the logicians' terminology without adopting their doctrines. Athanasius, for example, can say that it is the property of created beings to choose between alternatives; it is the property of bodies to be emptied and filled; it is the property of Christians to be beaten[12]. The idiom is rhetorical; Athanasius does not seriously mean that no one but a Christian ever gets beaten, but rather that they often suffer this fate.

More generally, whether something is to be categorized as a quality or not depends largely on the writer's intentions. Take the accepted definition of man as 'a two-footed animal capable of laughter'. 'Animal' is the *summum genus*; 'two-footed' defines a sub-class of it; but 'capable of laughter' is the ἴδιον, the quality which belongs to man universally and uniquely, *omni et solo*. But in describing it thus, how extremely remote one is from the reality under review, from the infinitely variable performance which we call 'a sense of humour', which involves both action and response, for one can both make jokes and be amused by them; not forgetting the category of quantity, since everyone knows that a good joke can be spoiled by being overdone.

Arius, then, wrote that the Son has nothing proper to God in the real sense of 'property'. His intention is to indicate mysteries and glories in the Father which are unknown even to the Son. We may dislike this doctrine; but we should not commend our dislike by attacking the form of expression. Arius is using a logician's short-hand that is allowable in its proper context. We have just observed Dr. Williams writing in a similar vein; and no one, I trust, will dismiss Dr Williams as an arid logician.

I do not propose this as a conclusive demonstration, since the logicians themselves were capable of rhetorical and tendentious argument; nevertheless I submit that so far we have found no proof that Arius was affected by Porphyrian logic. And there is another reason to doubt this suggestion. Porphyry's logical works are not cited either by Eusebius or by the Alexandrian philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis, though both of them know his *De Abstinentia*, nor again by Methodius. What reason have we to think that Arius was better informed?

(2) This first section of Williams' paper has required painstaking examination. The second, I think, can be more briefly considered. Williams refers to the phrase μέρος ὁμοούσιον, which Arius rejects in his credal letter, and comments,

[11] *Str.* 1.168.3, p. 105.5; 8.21.2, p. 93.3.
[12] *Orat.* 1.52; *Hist. Ar.* 41.

correctly, that it was suspect because of its materializing implications. Whatever grace or sonship the Father confers on any other being cannot be viewed as a material substance which issues from God and passes to them, if God is known to be simple and indivisible.

Williams then notes that the term ὁμοούσιος appears in Iamblichus, and suggests, very tentatively, that Iamblichus also may have influenced Arius. He refers to a passage discussing divine insphation. Could this be regarded as a process in which divine inspiration mixes or amalgamates itself with the soul? No, it is replied; for if some one thing is composed out of two, this is always uniform and connatural and consubstantial. But the divinity, which is 'uncombinable', ἀμικτον, could not amalgamate with the soul[13].

I do not find this parallel convincing, for several reasons:

(i) The context is different: divine generation in Arius, divine insphation of a soul in Iamblichus; both misleadingly compared, but to two contrary processes; division in one case, amalgamation in the other.

(ii) Iamblichus does not use the term μέρος, which is crucial to Arius' argument. Ὁμοούσιος is a sort of makeweight, used by the opposite party to strengthen their case; for it would be ridiculous to think of the Son as a μέρος of the Father which was *not* ὁμοούσιον, like a line, say, which is part of a triangle but is not a plane figure.

(iii) It seems unnecessary to bring in Iamblichus, for the doctrine that incorporeal substance is indivisible has a very long history. It goes back, presumably, to the puzzle propouned in Plato's *Parmenides* (how can an Idea be related to its multiple instances?) and the subsequent analysis of absolute Unity. This concept is taken up by Philo, Moderatus, Albinus, Numenius and Clement, contrasting either with a dyad or with an inferior unity, and is vividly characterized by Origen *De Principiis*, especially 1.2.6, 'We must take care not to fall into the absurd fables of those who imagine for themselves certain emanations, splitting the divine nature into parts and dividing God the Father'; and 4.4.4, 'It is impossible to speak of a part of what is incorporeal, or make any division of it'. Moreover the same point is made by Alexander of Lycopolis as an objection against the Manichees' docttine of a divine power analogous to the Logos: 'If it is part of God, then ... they make out God to be composite and corporeal; but this is absurd and impossible'[14]. And it is precisely as a Manichean doctrine that Arius rejects the phrase μέρος ὁμοούσιον.

Turning now to the points made in the book: the first and second of them have something in common. Williams attempts to explain Arius' contentions by citing parallels from Neoplatonic writers, in one case Porphyry, in the other Iamblichus. The passages adduced are correctly interpreted, and have a certain

[13] *J Th S.* art. cit. pp. 63-6

[14] Alex Lyc p. 24 Brinkmann; see *An Alexandrian Platonist* (etc.), ed P.W. van der Horst and J. Mansfeld (Leiden, 1974), p. 80; ed. A. Villey (Paris, 1985), p. 77.

illustrative value. But they by no means prove, or even suggest, that Arius was influenced by Neoplatonism; for in both cases we can offer an alternative explanation which avoids this assumption.

(3) We begin at p. 191 of the book, where Williams introduces the puzzling line from the *Thalia*: σὺνες ὅτι ἡ μονὰς ἦν, ἡ δυὰς δ' οὐκ ἦν πρὶν ὑπάρξῃ: in Williams 'You should understand that the Monad (always) was, but the Dyad was not before it came to be'. Williams refers to my own account of the term δυάς[15], which I still think was basically correct, but which admits of better presentation. I will briefly outline the background. The Neoplatonic use of μονάς and δυάς derives from the antithesis attributed to Plato by Theophrastus and other commentators[16] between the One and the 'Indefinite Dyad'; the One, or the Unit, functions as a measure; the Dyad is a second or derivative power, and also a duality; it represents those aspects of our experience which are unquantified, and therefore can be either more or less; accordingly it stands for the indefinite multiplicity of the world's constituents which issue from their primal source. Philo identifies the δυάς with τὸ γενόμενον, as opposed to the μονάς, which is ὁ πεποτηκώς (masculine, N.B.); he describes it as εἰκὼν παθητῆς καὶ διαιρετῆς ὕλης[17]. But a complication was introduced by the later recognition that there are two possible concepts of the Monad — a theory that was deduced from Plato's *Parmenides* — namely a One that is pure simplicity and a One which is essentially multiple; applied to theology, this appears as a distinction between a first and a second God, which is well known from its appearance in Numenius and Origen. Numenius does not himself use δυάς to denote the second God in any surviving fragment; the word appears only once, identified with matter in the manner of Philo[18]. But he certainly holds that there is a secondary God who is also a duality; so in fragment 16/25 reproduced by Eusebius ὁ γὰρ δεὐτερος διττὸς ὢν αὐτοποτεῖ τήν τε ἰδέαν ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τὸν κόσμον. Festugière[19] therefore is certainly right in seeing the closest possible connection between Numenius and fragment 8 of the *Chaldean Oracles* preserved by Proems: δυὰς παρὰ τῷδε κάθηται· ἀμφότερον γὰρ ἔχει, νῷ μὲν κατέχειν τὰ νοητὰ, αἴσθηστν δ' ἐπάγειν κόσμοις — which expresses both his secondary position (for in fr. 7 he appears as 'second mind') — and his dual role in cosmology. And we can recognize this dual role in the Arian Logos, though admittedly it is not expressed in a single antithesis, for he both glorifies the Father and attends to the created world. I would not assert that Arius knew the *Chaldean Oracles*; but since most of the surviving fragments of Numenius are preserved by Eusebius they could have reached

[15] *J Th S.* n.s. 15 (1960), p. 19

[16] W.D. Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford, 1951) pp. 184-5.

[17] *Somn.* ii 70, *Spec. Leg.* iii 180

[18] Fr. 11 des Places, l. 15.

[19] *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste* iii (Paris, 1953), pp. 55-6.

Arius directly, quite apart from some indirect influence mediated by Origen. In either case appeal to the Neoplatonic arithmetic is unnecessary, if not positively misleading. Consider this passage from Iamblichus *Theologoumena Arithmeticae* p. 9: δυὰς λέγεται παρὰ τὸ διιέναι καὶ διαπορεύεσθαι: πρώτη γὰρ ἡ δυὰς διεχώρτσεν ἀάτὴν ἐκ τῆς μονάδος, ὅθεν καὶ τόλρα καλεῖται, and so on.

I translate: 'The Dyad is so called because of its "diadyctic" and penetrative power; for the Dyad was the first to separate itself from the Monad, whence indeed it is called self-assertion'. I need not emphasize the contrast between this divisive self-originating power and the Arian Logos, evoked from nothing by his Father's will and addressed in the words 'Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee'

(4). The following section of the book, entided 'Intellect and Beyond', is an extended discussion of the role of intellect in the universe, including the distinction between a primary intellect identified as its first principle and a secondary intellect, the divine Logos[20]. On pp. 208-9 Williams discusses Arius' views on the Son's knowledge of the Father. Arius appears to contradict himself; on the one hand he argues for a positive though limited knowledge — *Thalia* 14, 15, 31 W. — based on the Father's self-knowledge (14); on the other he says (35, 36) 'It is impossible for him to search out the mysteries of the Father ... for the Son does (even) know his own substance (οὐσια); thus (39) 'He cannot know by comprehension — ἐν καταλήψει — the one who gave him birth'. According to Williams the Son's ignorance of his own οὐσια 'has long been a puzzle' (p. 209); and he proposes to explain the contradiction by citing Plotinus 5.3 7, which admittedly bears some resemblance to Arius' words.

Nevertheless we need not invoke Plotinus, for a far simpler explanation lies ready to hand. It is to be found in Bishop Alexander's letter Ἡ φίλαρχος, §§ 20, 21. Alexander asks, how can any sane man explain the hypostasis of the Logos? The prophetic Spirit refers to it, saying 'Who shall declare his generation?' (Is. 53:8); and the Saviour himself, in his kindness towards the Saints, relieves them of any responsibility for such knowledge, saying that it is naturally incomprehensible to them all (πᾶσι[ν] ... αὐτοὶς ἀφυσικὸν εἰς κατάληψιν), a mystery known only to the Father; he then quotes a New Testament text identified by Opitz as Matt. 11:27, but in reality closer to its parallel at Luke 10:22; Alexander's wording is: οὐδὲις γὰρ ἔγνω τίς ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς εἰ μὴ ὁ πατήρ, κάτ τὸν πατέρα οὐδεὶς ἔγνωκεν εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱός. Recalling the same text at § 47, he reverses the order of the two clauses, but retains Luke's τις ἐστι formulation in both cases.

The text presents problems which had long been recognized[21]: Christian theology would come to a stand if we had absolutely no knowledge of the Son,

[20] See *PGL* s.v. νοῦς F.3 a, "Son as νοῦς"

[21] See e.g. Eusebius *Dem. Ev.* 5.1.25-6

and yet had to depend upon the Son for our knowledge of the Father. The solution must be that we have a degree of knowledge sufficient for our needs, but not exact or comprehensive knowledge. And both Alexander and Arius think along these lines; they both introduce the Stoic term κατάληψις to indicate the complete understanding that we cannot attain. In other respects, of course, they differ. Alexander says that the Son's hypostasis is 'not naturally comprehensible' (ἀφυστκὸν εἰς κατάληψιν) to anyone but the Father, since he holds that the Son exactly resembles the Father; he tactfully omits any qualifying clause to the effect that our ignorance of the Son cannot be absolute. And Arius is also concerned with the Son's hypostasis, and is indebted to the same Lucan text; its opening words πάντα μοτ παρεδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρός μου are recalled in his Letter to Alexander, § 5, παρά τοῦ θεοῦ ... τὰ πάντα αὐτῷ παρεδόθη. Arius is concerned to stress the absolute transcendence of the Father; and since the Lucan text asserts that only the Father knows 'who the Son is', τις ἐστι, it is a simple deduction that even the Son has mysteries which he cannot explain ἐν καταλήψετ. He cannot exactly comprehend either his Father or his origination or his own being, his οὐσία. There is no need, therefore, to appeal to Plotinus.

(5) I turn now to Williams' last point, set out in § III of the paper and expanded in Part III Section C of the book, entitled 'Analogy and Participation'. According to Williams '"Participation" is primarily the word used by Plato to designate the relation existing between forms or ideas and particulars'[22]; he means, of course, that particulars participate in the forms, but not vice versa. But Aristotle denied such forms; and his successors, we are told, redefine participation to denote a relationship between equal members of the same species. 'Substantial participation, then', says Williams[23], 'is understood by the third-century writers we have mentioned in a "lateral" rather than a "vertical" sense'. This leads him to make the useful point that not only ὁμοούσιος but ὁμοιούσιος could suggest that 'God' is the name of a genus which has several members[24]. He then refers to the Aristotelian commentators Alexander of Aphrodisias and Porphyry, suggesting that it was they who put the so-called 'lateral' sense of participation into common usage.

Williams offers no concrete evidence to suggest that his proposed redefinition influenced Christian writers. Alexander's relevance might yet be arguable; but the evidence taken from Porphyry can be dismissed at once, as it rests on a sheer mistranslation. Williams makes him say that if A and B participate, then they are equal. What he actually says is that if A and B participate *in a third thing, C*, then they participate equally if C is a species or a genus, but may participate unequally if C is an accident (*Isagoge*, p. 17.6, cf. 22.9-10); thus Socrates and

[22] *J Th S* 34, p. 67

[23] Ibid., p. 68

[24] Ibid., p. 70.

Callias must be equally men, but need not be equally wise. This is simply a version of Aristotle's well-known dictum that substance does not admit of degrees[25] Moreover Porphyry clearly sets aside Aristotle's view of participation as 'an empty metaphor' and continues to use it its Platonic sense[26].

The whole argument needs to be reconsidered. First, the distinction between two senses of μετέχειν and its cognates does not originate with Platonic metaphysics and its detractors, as Williams appears to suggest. Μετέχειν is pre-Platonic, and is used with a *genitivus rei*, for instance by Theognis and Herodotus; and μέτοχος likewise. The looser sense of μέτοχος to mean simply 'partner', with a personal genitive to mean 'someone's partner', appears in the third century B.C., according to Bauer[27]; but the most striking case is the LXX version of Psalm 44 (45); 3, which is quoted at Hebrews 1:9: διὰ τοῦτο ἔχρισέν σε ὁ θεός, ὁ θεός σου, ἔλαιον ἀγαλλιάσεως παρὰ τοὺς μετόχους σου. The μέτοχοι here may be seen as companions of inferior rank, but they clearly do not participate in the authority of the prince as their ideal exemplar; and in Luke 5:7, καὶ κατένευσαν τοῖς μετόχοις ἐν τῷ ἑτέρῳ πλοίῳ, we translate quite naturally 'they beckoned to their partners', who are fishermen of equal rank. It follows, fust, that Aristotle does not use μετέχειν to denote a relation between equals, but rather in its Platonic sense, to express his criticism of Plato; and Porphyry follows suit. Secondly, that what Williams calls 'horizontal participation' was expressed in texts that were familiar to the Church almost from its outset.

As the distinction of two senses does not originate in philosophical discussion, I would prefer to contrast them by the purely formal point that one is symmetrical, the other is not. If A is B's partner, then B must be A's; but if A or B engage in an activity C, then C does not engage in them. St. Paul says that 'we all partake of one bread'; we all eat this bread, but we ourselves are not eaten.

It seems, then, that a reference to Alexander of Aphrodisias is not needed to explain the facts as presented. The hypothesis that Aristotelian commentators could have influenced Christian thought in the early fourth century would be hard to disprove; but we can surely establish that it is most unlikely. We can reflect that the Aristotelian commentators examined their master's works with

[25] *Categg.* 5, 3 b 33, 4 a 9.

[26] The distinction between substantial and accidental participation should be noticed. It is found both in Alexander and in Porphyry. But I have not found it in Christian writers. Athanasius at least assumes that 'participation' indicates an unstable and impermanent relation; thus μετουσία is regularly contrasted with οὐσία. The contrast is found in the literature relating to Paul of Samosata; see H. de Riedmatten, *Les Actes du Procès de Paul de Samosate* (*Paradosis* 6; Fribourg, 1952), p. 149f. (S. 25): *Tu vero videris mihi secundum hoc nolle compositionem fateri ut non substantia sit in eo Filius Dei sed sapiemia secundum participationem.* Cf. also S. 31, p. 155, and esp. S. 36, p. 157, ll. 4-10.

[27] W. Bauer, *Griechisch-deutsches Wörterbuch des NT*, etc. (6th edn., 1988).

the same patient and meticulous care as Christians devoted to the Bible; there is no sign that Christians examined even Aristotle's own works in this fashion, let alone the commentators upon him. In particular Eusebius, the most learned scholar of his generation, knows and quotes Porphyry, but never once refers to his logical works, not even the *Isagoge*. And as for Alexander, Eusebius quotes his influential *De Fato*; but so far from citing his commentaries, he never even mentions their existence.

It remains nevertheless to consider a point which could seem to support Dr. Williams' views on 'horizontal participation'. I refer to the claim, introduced by the homoiousian party and attributed by Athanasius to Paul of Samosata[28], that if two beings are *homoousia* there must be a third, prior, *ousia* from which both are derived. This argument presumably originated in Christian circles, though perhaps using pagan material[29]; *homoousios* was important for Christians, but rather marginal for pagans; yet it seems to involve a fairly sophisticated reflection on the term, contrasting with its loose and ill-defined usage, say, in Irenaeus and probably at Nicaea.

The Nicenes replied that the Father himself is the supreme *ousia*, as of course the Arians insisted; it then remained to be argued whether any other being can be called *homoousios* with him without suggesting some loss of substance or some infringement of his supremacy. The Nicenes of course admit that the Son and the Spirit are derived from the Father, but insist that they nevertheless enjoy full equality with him. This might suggest that they reinterpret the language of participation, giving importance, in Dr. Williams' terms, to 'horizontal' rather than 'vertical' participation.

If a prior *ousia* be disallowed, *homousios* can indeed indicate what I call a symmetrical relation. It can be used of the Father and Son in conjunction, or of the Trinity as a whole. But the symmetry is not complete; I have not yet traced any pronouncement that the *Father* is *homoousios* with the Son or the Spirit; such teaching, if it ever existed, must have been a rarity. More important, it has not been shown that this controversy affected the terms expressing participation, e.g. μετέχειν, μέτοχος, μετουσία, in such a way as to confum Dr. Williams' proposal. On the contrary, when used in Trinitarian contexts, they seem to indicate an asymmetrical relation which is also accidental rather than essential; this is particularly clear in the case of μετουσία. The use of μετέχειν, qualified by ὅλως, to denote the Son's relation to the Father, in Athanasius *c. Ar.* i. 16, is distinctly unusual and perhaps inadvertent, since the word is used in the following sentence to denote *our* participation in the Son by grace; this fact, and its connection with γεννᾶν, suggests that he was thinking *currente calamo*

[28] See Hilary *syn.* 81; Athanasius *syn.* 45; Basil *Ep.* 52.1. Excellent discussion in F. Dinsen, *Homousios* (Diss., Kiel, 1976) pp. 41-51.

[29] See for instance Plotinus *Enn.* 6.1.2, presumably based on Aristotle, *Metaph.* Γ.4, 1000 b 26.

rather than following any established convention. His normal use of such terms appears at *c. Gent.* 46, *c. Ar.* i.9, and *Syn*, 51.

We have shown above that fourth-century Christians had access to texts in which participation needs to be understood in a symmetrical sense. But it seems most improbable that they recognised this as a distinct usage. I know of no text that points this out; rather, the accidental sense of participation seems to be taken for granted. It is therefore a surprising thesis that fourth-century Christian writers went over to use participation language to denote equal partnership. The further suggestion that this was prompted by a general adoption of Aristotelian metaphysics which discarded the Platonic Forms, I can only regard as fantastic. I am quite unable to believe that this aspect of Aristotelian thought influenced either Christians of the fourth century or contemporary Neoplatonists; though both could accommodate Aristotelian logic, following Porphyry; and the Neoplatonists at least could find a place for the ἔνυλον εἶδος. But this was not felt as a challenge to the authority of Plato. By way of confirmation, a quick look at the first book of Iamblichus *On the Mysteries of Egypt* yielded about thirty examples of μετέχειν, μέτοχος and related terms, all entirely consonant with the Platonic tradition and without any sense of participation between equal partners.

I will conclude by reverting to a point suggested in my 1964 paper which perhaps needs to be more clearly restated. It has been customary among scholars to divide the later Platonists into two groups, distinguished according to their treatment of Plato's *Timaeus*. The great majority accepted Aristotle's doctrine of the eternity of the world[30] and the impossibility of a beginning of time[31]; accordingly Plato's description of a quasi-temporal act of creation was treated by them as a mere pedagogic device, intended for simple people to show the world's eternal dependence on its first principle. Only a minority, among whom Plutarch and Atticus are commonly named, continued to interpret the *Timaeus* as describing a real beginning, at least of an ordered cosmos, though not necessarily of material being itself. The majority, represented by Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus, were in varying degrees hostile to Christianity; nevertheless some Christian thinkers, Origen in particular, were influenced by their teaching. Origen is clearly impressed by the reasoning that since the Father is eternal, his relationships must be eternal; so just as he always had his eternally begotten Son, so 'all genera and species have for ever existed, and possibly even individual things'[32], and the biblical doctrine of creation has to be relativised, as describing the origin simply of *this* world, considered as one of a successive series[33]. Bishop Alexander rejects this theory, since he sharply

[30] *Cael.* 3.2, 301 b 33
[31] *Metaph.* 12.6, 1071 b 7
[32] *Princ.* 1.4.5.
[33] Ibid. 3.5.3, cf. 2.3.5-6.

distinguishes between creation and the eternal generation of the Son: 'the creation of the world from nothing implies a new subsistence and a recent beginning' (τὸ δὲ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων δημουργεῖσθαι τὸν κόσμον νεωτέραν ἔχει τὴν ὑπόστασιν καὶ πρόοφατον τὴν γένεσιν)[34], which seems to preclude any suggestion of previous worlds. But Arius takes a more radical line; as I previously expressed it, 'Origen had placed the Father in an eternal relationship, not only with the Son, but even in principle with the world. Arius asserts the Father's priority, not only to the world, but to the Son'. Accordingly the Son had a real and momentary beginning, even if it is not strictly a beginning in time.

But this surely means that Arius stands at the furthest possible remove from the majority, or eternalist, school of Neoplatonic philosophers; from Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus. I have tried to show that his supposed dependence on various points of their doctrine is illusory. But even if I am here mistaken, and there were some traces of dependence, nevertheless any sort of general agreement is out of the question. I have to conclude that Dr. Williams has been advancing, with great ingenuity and learning, a theory which we must reject as unfounded.

[34] Opitz *Urk.* 14, § 18.

Appendix

Metechein, metochos, metoche, metousia, methexis, in late antiquity

1 Aristotle follows Plato's usage of terms such as *metechein* while rejecting the ideal theory. So also his commentators; e.g.:

Alex. Aphr. *in Metaph.* 101.3: Καὶ τοῦτο, μετέχειν τὰ τῇδε ἐκείνων, κενολογεῖν ἐστι καὶ μεταφοραῖς χρήσθαι ποιητικαῖς. Cf. Metaph. A9, 991 a 21-2.

2 The commentators also continue to use *metechein* etc. to denote hierarchical relations between individuals, species and genera: see next item.

3. Both Alexander and Porphyry draw a clear distinction between essential and accidental participation:

Alex. op. cit. 91.10: εἰ δὲ μὴ καθ' αὑτὸ ἀλλὰ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς μετέχει τὰ ἐνταῦθα τῶν ἰδεῶν ...

Porphyry *Isagoge* 17.6: Καὶ τοῦ μὲν γένους ἐπίσης τὰ μετέχοντα μετέχει, τοῦ δὲ συμβεβηκότος οὐκ ἐπίσης· ἐπὶ ταῖν γὰρ καὶ ἀνεσιν ἐπιδέχεται ἡ τῶν συμβεβηκότων μέθεξις.

Ibid. 21.15: Καὶ τοῦ μὲν εἴδους ἡ μετοχὴ ἐπίσης, τοῦ δὲ συμβεβηκότος, κἂν ἀχώριστον ᾖ, οὐκ ἐπίσης.

Ibid. 22.9-10: Καὶ τῶν μὲν εἴδων ἐπίσης ἡ μετοχή, τῶν δὲ συμβεβηκότων ἡ μὲν μᾶλλον ἡ δὲ ἧττον.

4 The distinction is less sharp in some Platonist writers; thus the 'second God' participates in the first, indicating neither complete correspondence nor mere accidental similarity:

Numenius fr. 20 (Eus. *P.E.* 11.22.10) εἰκότως ὁ δημιουργός εἴπερ ἐστι μετουσίᾳ τοῦ πρώτου ἀγαθοῦ ἀγαθός, ⟨ἀγαθου⟩ ἰδέα ἂν εἴη ὁ πρῶτος νοῦς.

Cf. also fr. 19.

Origen is similar: *In Ioh.* 2.2.16: πᾶν δὲ τὸ παρὰ τὸ αὐτόθεος μετοχῇ τῆς ἐκείνου θεότητος θεοποιούμενον οὐχ ὁ θεὸς ἀλλὰ θεός.

Per contra Sel. in Ps. 135 (Lomm. 13.134): The Logos is God οὐσίᾳ, not μετουσίᾳ. This contrast was imitated: see 6 below.

5 *Metousia* can also apply to the created world:

Numenius fr. 16 (Eus. *P.E.* 11.22.5): ἧς μίμημα ὁ καλὸς κόσμος, κεκαλλωπισμένος μετουσίᾳ τοῦ κάλου:

not mere accidental likeness, but obvious inferiority.

6. Christian writers often ignore essential participation and imply that any participation is always accidental:

Paul of Samosata (as reported), fr. 33 (p. 155 de Riedmatten):

τὴν δὲ συνάφειαν ἑτέρως πρὸς τὴν σοφίαν νοεῖ, κατὰ μάθησιν καὶ μετουσίαν, οὐχὶ οὐσίαν οὐσιωμένην ἐν σώματι. (Cf. fr. 22 and 25 for background).

7. This contrast is often used as an artifice of controversy; e.g. by Athanasius; but he is not consistent; thus *c. Ar.* i.15 κατὰ μετουσίαν υἱός is supposedly an Arian phrase; yet ib. 16, perplexingly, ὁ υἱος οὐδένος μετέχει, τὸ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς μετεχόμενον, τοῦτό ἐστιν ὁ υἱός.

VI

ARIUS ON GOD'S 'MANY WORDS'

AFTER sifting the evidence as carefully as I can, I am still puzzled how to answer the question: Did Arius teach a radically reductionist view of the Logos?

Virtually all our knowledge of Arius' teaching derives from his opponents. Nevertheless it is possible to distinguish some material which is clearly presented as actual quotation of Arius' own writings; some other material is generally admitted to be mere polemical travesty; and there is a large disputed middle ground, to which unfortunately one must assign the important summaries transmitted in Athanasius *c. Ar.* i. 5–9. Well-respected scholars such as Bardy and Kannengiesser treat these as quotations; I and some others dissent.

I have recently argued that the undisputed documentary sources pretty consistently disclose Arius as teaching a relatively high view of the Logos. He is determined to safeguard the Father's pre-eminence; but, this point secured, he has no pressing concern to reduce the honours traditionally accorded to the Logos; he describes him as 'mighty God', as *Monogenēs*, as God's first-born Son, as the Wisdom who assisted the Father at the creation. Athanasius himself, while criticizing Arius' presentation of this last point, cannot deny that it was made. The contrary view, that Arius described the Logos as merely one of the creatures, or alternatively as a mere man, does not rest on good documentary evidence but on polemical sallies which have been wrongly treated as quotations. This is the case which I have defended.[1] It seems clear, at least, that the contrary view so engagingly presented by Drs Gregg and

[1] See especially my article 'The *Thalia* of Arius and the Testimony of Athanasius', *J T S* N.S. xxix (1978), pp. 20–52. This is perhaps the moment to record my appreciation of Professor M. L. West's subsequent article 'The Metre of Arius' *Thalia*', ibid. (1982), pp. 98–105. I will say at once that I bow to Professor West's knowledge of Greek metrics, and apart from small details, I think his analysis is much more likely to be right than my own; Sotadeans let it be! At the same time his analysis does not damage, and was not intended to damage, two points which I regarded as fundamental in my own article: (i) that *any* convincing metrical analysis of the *Thalia* text provided by *Syn.* 15 sets that text on a much better critical basis than the material given in *c. Ar.* i. 5–9, apart from the first five lines quoted in i. 5; (ii) that the former text shows Arius to be less radically opposed to orthodoxy than his opponents try to make out.

Groh[2] is open to grave objection on critical grounds. Professor S. G. Hall has drawn attention to some of their mistakes; thus on p. 21, when quoting a sentence from *c. Ar.* iii. 24 which purports to express the Arian view, they entirely overlook the introductory clause 'unless they are so rash as to say', which clearly identifies the sequel as an Athanasian construct. Another gem from their book, which Hall has not mentioned, is footnote 45 on p. 33, where a sentence from the *Thalia* is misconstrued so as to suggest that Jesus was not even *αοφός*. Their argument rests on a juxtaposition of the two clauses 'He is not consubstantial with Him', namely God, and 'God is wise'. But obviously the conclusion does not follow; and we cannot even be sure that it was meant to follow, since we cannot prove that Arius himself made the two clauses run consecutively; for what it was worth, Bardy marks a break at this point.

My general stance, of course, admits of some qualifications. Within the Arian camp I think there were some real reductionists; Athanasius of Anazarba, perhaps, for one; with Aetius occupying a position slightly to the left of Arius himself. But the discussion must now be brought to a point; and I wish to consider one reported saying of Arius which has been interpreted as evincing a reductionist view. It occurs in *de Decretis* 16, but rather oddly was omitted by Bardy from his attempted collection of fragments. After a reference to the followers of Eusebius, Athanasius says that the Arian party find their last resource, *ἐκεῖνο λοιπὸν ἔχουσιν ὑπολειπόμενον*, in a question put by Arius, *ὃ καὶ ἐν ᾽Αμαθίοις Ἄρειος καὶ ἐν τῇ ἑαυτοῦ Θαλίᾳ ὡς ἐπαπορῶν μυθολογεῖ· πολλοὺς λαλεῖ λόγους ὁ Θεός· ποῖον αὐτῶν ἆρα λέγομεν ἡμεῖς υἱὸν καὶ λόγον γνήσιον τοῦ Πατρός*; roughly, 'God speaks many words; which of these do we say is the Son and only-begotten Word of the Father?' Athanasius retorts that God utters only *one* Word; to use more would be a sign of weakness. This of course is a mere debating point, since he himself is quite prepared to describe God using a plurality of words; as in *c. Ar.* iii. 2, *καὶ ὁ μὲν Μωσῆς τοὺς παρὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ διηκονεῖ λόγους* (to which the Lexicon gives parallels, s.v. I.A. 9); but it shows that he took the Arian text to mean that there is nothing distinctive about the Logos; he is merely one of a class of beings. There is a rather similar argument in *c. Ar.* ii. 36, where Athanasius asserts that men utter many words because each of them perishes when spoken; but God has only one Word, who is unchanging.

Athanasius' understanding of the Arian sentence has been generally accepted; and most recently by Rudolf Lorenz in a fine

[2] *Early Arianism—A View of Salvation*, by Robert C. Gregg and Dennis E. Groh (London, 1981)

article in *ZKG* (1983),[3] p. 25, which suggests a parallel from Origen's *Commentary on John*, ii. 3. 23; Origen, he says, mentions a contrast between the supreme Logos and other *logoi* of the second and third degree. I do not think he is right in his reading of the text; as I see it, Origen is not reviewing a heavenly hierarchy, which might offer a parallel to the Arian Logos; he is saying that the word *λόγος* has much the same variety of senses as the word *θεός*; *θεός* can be used of the Father, of (e.g.) Moses, as partaking of God, or of false gods. Similarly, the 'second logos' is to be identified as the devout man's reason; the 'third logos' is the deception which falsely claims the name of reason; Origen speaks of *νομιζομένων μὲν λόγων οὐκ ὄντων δὲ ἀληθῶς λόγων, ἀλλ' ἵν' οὕτως εἴπω, ὅλον τοῦτο ἀλόγων λόγων*, corresponding to the false gods.

So the suggested parallel from Origen does not support Lorenz's view. I cannot see any indication that the 'false reason' is personified and regarded as a spirit of deception. Moreover, I cannot discern that the Lexicon offers any parallel for the use of *λόγοι* in the plural to denote heavenly powers, though admittedly several Gnostic systems incorporate a *singular Λόγος* into their hierarchy of spiritual beings. I think that Lorenz may possibly have drawn his interpretation from an essay by that admirable scholar Franz-Heinrich Kettler (FS Robert Stupperich (1969), p. 237 n. 4) who also maintains that Origen refers to the heavenly hierarchy by the term *λόγοι*, though only seldom. Kettler notes three passages, of which the first is that used by Lorenz and already discussed. The second passage occurs earlier in the *Commentary on John* (i. 7. 38) and the crucial phrase is by no means clear to me; Origen is plainly referring to the *simpliciores* who are instructed, not by the Logos himself, but by preparatory agents adapted to their state; to them *οἱ μὲν πρόδρομοι Χριστοῦ ἐπιδεδημιήκαοι παισὶ ψυχαῖς ἁρμόζοντες λόγοι*. But the whole discussion begins with the statement that the Gospel is a *λόγος* (i. 5. 27), and a contrast between Law and Gospel immediately follows (sect. 39); after which a contrast is drawn between the Saviour's *λόγοι* and his *πράξεις*; all of which suggests to me that *λόγοι* in i. 7. 38 most probably means elementary doctrines or sayings, or possibly prophetic titles of Christ. We cannot, of course, *disprove* the notion that Arius may have personalized the phrase, taking it out of context; but this would be grasping a straw. The third case, a passage from *Comm. Matt.* xiii, Kl. p. 183. 1, seems to me to be doubtful too, because it throws out the suggestion that Elijah might be a *λόγος* (or 'Elijah' signify a *λόγος*?), and this appears to be an afterthought,

[3] 'Die Christusseele im Arianischen Streit. Nebst einigen Bemerkungen zur Quellenkritik des Arius und zur Glaubwürdigkeit des Athanasius', op. cit., pp. 1–51

as if Origen were merely noting an opinion which might be held and showing that it does not radically interfere with his interpretation of Matt. xvii. 10. This reading of the passage would be endorsed if we were to follow Diehl, Koetschau, and the Latin translation in reading *καὶ οὕτως* for the *καὶ οὗτος* of the Greek manuscripts and Klostermann's text. As it is, we first have a sentence which seems to take *λόγοι* as 'sayings' or 'considerations': *καὶ ἔοικέ γε διὰ τούτων* (sc. Mal. iii. 22 f.) *δηλοῦσθαι ὅτι προευτρεπίζει ὁ Ἠλίας τῇ ἐνδόξῳ Χριστοῦ ἐπιδημίᾳ διά τινων ἱερῶν λόγων καὶ καταστάσεων ἐν ταῖς ψυχοῖς τοὺς εἰς τοῦτο ἐπιτηδείους γενομένους* . . . and then after an interval a sentence which *might* allow of a personalizing interpretation: *εἰ δὲ καὶ λόγος τίς ἐστιν ὁ Ἠλίας, ὑποδεέστερος λόγου τοῦ «ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν» θεοῦ λόγου, καὶ οὗτος (οὕτως?) ἂν δύναιτο ὥσπερ προγύμναομα ἐπιδημεῖν τῷ ἑτοιμαζομένῳ λαῷ ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, ἵνα γένηται κατεσκευασμένος πρὸς ὑποδοχὴν τοῦ τελείου λόγου.* None of these passages makes it seem very natural that Arius should have used a phrase about words spoken by God as a reference to heavenly powers; though I admit that we can find much better parallels for this movement of thought if we are prepared to go back to Philo; see, for instance, *Leg. All.* iii. 176–7.

But I would like to suggest that this whole interpretation of the Arian dictum may be mistaken. Consider the wording again: *πολλοὺς λαλεῖ λόγους ὁ Θεός. ποῖον αὐτῶν ἄρα λέγομεν ἡμεῖς υἱὸν καὶ λόγον μονογενῆ τοῦ Πατρός;* If Arius were really arguing that there is nothing uniquely distinctive about the divine Logos, as Athanasius alleges, why should he spoil his case by introducing a reference precisely to the *unique*, or only-begotton, Son and Word of the Father? If the concluding words are genuine, they demand some other interpretation; if they are not, the whole quotation is so corrupt that no conclusion can be drawn.

The point which I think Arius is making is as follows: the term 'logos', taken by itself, is insufficiently distinctive to indicate the true divine Logos, who is God's only Son, and unique or only-begotten Word. God speaks many words; *ποῖον αὐτῶν ἄρα λέγομεν ἡμεῖς υἱὸν καὶ λόγον μονογενῆ τοῦ Πατρός;* The question appears to expect the answer 'None'; and of course there is good precedent in Origen for seeing the Logos as endowed with a complex of titles which have to be taken together to express his full being, he must not be described as 'Logos' only. A well-known example is *Commentary on John*, i. 21–4 (= i. 23), though the passage is too long to quote.

But why should Arius argue in this way? It would be natural to see it as an argument directed against Marcellus, who after all was more radically opposed to Arius *in theology* than was his bishop,

Alexander, and who was considerably senior to Athanasius. Marcellus had argued that prior to his Incarnation God's Logos was Logos and nothing else (fr. 42, 43, 48, 49, 91, etc.); and we find Eusebius objecting to this view, and arguing in several places that a whole complex of titles belongs to him, Son, God, Life, Light (*E. T.* ii. 10, p. 111, cf. ii. 14, pp. 115, 118). There is also a parallel to the opening sentence *πολλοὺς λαλεῖ λόγους ὁ Θεός*, though it occurs in a rather complex argument at ii. 24 which is difficult to quote. Eusebius complains that Marcellus brings together a whole series of texts which name 'the word of the Lord' and wrongly conflates them with the Word who was in the beginning, though in fact they are merely commandments and directives: so *ὁ θαυμαστὸς οὗτος* (sc. Marcellus) *τὰς ἐντολὰς τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς παραγγελτικοὺς τῶν πρακτέων λόγους ἀπὸ τῆς θείας συναγαγὼν γμαφῆς τοιοῦτόν τινα ὁρίζεται τὸν ἐν ἀμχῇ λόγον.* And after quoting Marcellus at length he adds: 'What word does this text (Amos 5: 10) present but the word of commandment about holy and righteous actions? And he intends anything rather than acknowledging the Son of God, as if he were ashamed to make mention of the Son'—*τὸ γὰρ «ἐμίαηααν . . . καὶ λόγον ὅαιον ἐβδελύξαντο» ποῖον ὑποτίθεται λόγον ἢ . . . τὸν . . . παραγγελτικόν, πάντα τε μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ὁμολογεῖν βούλεται, ὥαπερ αἰδούμενος μνημονεῦοαι τοῦ υἱοῦ.* The Arian sentence might almost be described as an abbreviation of this passage. Cf. also *c. Marc.* i. 1 16.

If this is conceded, it helps to establish a picture of the Arian Logos such as Kettler himself attributed to Origen. Contrasted with God the Father he must inevitably be seen as belonging to the created order; but if we consider his place within that order, he appears as first-born and unique. If my argument is sound, there is no need for us to accept Athanasius' claim that Arius regarded the Logos as merely one of the creatures.

VII

THE WORD 'FROM NOTHING'

FOR REINHARD HÜBNER: amico bene merito

ARIUS' dictum that the Logos is 'from nothing', ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, has attracted some notice;[1] but I think that its meaning has not been sufficiently clarified. I propose to discuss four particulars: first, the provenance of the phrase; secondly its context in Arius' doctrine of the Logos; thirdly, the part it played in contemporary controversy; and fourthly, the justice or injustice of the criticisms it incurred.

1. 'FROM NOTHING': PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

The phrase occurs in what is commonly considered Arius' earliest surviving work, the letter to Eusebius of Nicomedia, printed by Opitz as *Urkunde* 1 and dated by him *c* 318. Arius writes: 'We are persecuted also because we said, he is from nothing. We spoke thus because he is neither a part of God nor (derived) from any (prior) substance' (διωκόμεθα καὶ ὅτι εἴπομεν, ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ἐστίν οὕτως δὲ εἴπομεν, καθότι οὐδὲ μέρος θεοῦ ἐστιν οὐδὲ ἐξ ὑποκειμένου τινός). The 'also' refers back to the previous sentence: 'we are persecuted because we said, "the Son has a beginning, whereas God (ὁ θεός) is without beginning"', which can be left aside for the moment.

I discussed Arius' reasoning in my book *Divine Substance* pp. 235 f., pointing out that it stems from a philosophical commonplace found in Irenaeus, Tertullian, a Valentinian speaker quoted by Methodius, and Theognostus quoted by Athanasius;[2] if something comes into being it must derive either from something or from nothing, and in the former case either from God or from something else. Rudolf Lorenz has noticed the same triad in Clement of Alexandria, str. 2.74.1; and I should have mentioned Origen *princ.* 4.4.1, and the observation made by Verbeke that the same three possibilities are suggested by Plutarch, *Platonic Questions* 4, p. 1003a: 'for the soul was not making the nature of the body from itself, nor from nothing, but (made) an orderly body out of what was without order and unshaped' (οὐ γὰμ ἐξ αὑτῆς ἡ ψυχὴ τὴν τοῦ ὡώματος ἐδημιούργει φύοιν οὐδ' ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος,

[1] See R. P. C. Hanson, 'Who taught ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων', in R. C. Gregg (ed.), *Arianism* (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 79–83; R. Lorenz, *Arius Judaizans?* (Göttingen, 1979) (hereafter *AJ*), pp. 38 f.; G. C. Stead, 'The Platonism of Arius', *JTS*, NS, 15 (1964), 25 f.

[2] Iren., *Haer.* 2.10.4; Tertullian, *adv. Herm.* 2.1; Methodius, *Autex.* 2.9, p. 150; Athanasius, *Decr.* 25.

ἀλλ' ἐκ σώματος ἀτάκτου καὶ ἀσχηματίστου σῶμα τεταγμένον)[3] There are slight variations in the wording: ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων is the form which occurs in Methodius; Theognostus has the variant ἐκ μὴ ὄντων, while Plutarch's ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος is used occasionally by Arius' opponents.

We may notice in Arius' letter the slightly apologetic tone of 'We spoke thus ..'; and in fact there is a flaw in his logic; by opting for ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων he excludes the possibility that the Logos is ἐκ θεοῦ: the reason given is that ἐκ θεοῦ would imply that he is μέρος θεοῦ, thus raising well-founded objections to any division or diminution of the Godhead. Arius may well be following Origen loc. cit. (*non enim dicimus .. partem aliquam substantiae dei in filium versum*) while ignoring the corrections which Origen hastens to add: the generation of the Logos does not involve corporeal passions, but resembles the generation of (an act of) will from the mind. In his other writings Arius allows—indeed insists on—ἐκ θεοῦ: so e.g. *Thalia* l. 31 (Ath. *Syn* 15, Opitz 243. l. 12) while maintaining his protest against any physical interpretation of it (*Urk* 6 § 5).

Two observations are needed to explain the background of the phrase 'from nothing'. First there is the well-known commonplace *ex nihilo nihil fit*, which originates quite early in Greek philosophy. Possibly its first occurrence is Parmenides fr 8 (Simplicius *Phys.* 145 1 ff.)

οὐδ' ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐάσσω
φάσθαι σ' οὐδὲ νοεῖν, οὐ γὰμ φατὸν οὐδὲ νοητὸν
ἔστιν ὅπως οὐκ ἔστιν

nor shall I allow thee to say or to think 'from that which is not'; for it is not to be said or thought that it is not [Or perhaps, more logically, 'for non-existence cannot be described or conceived']

Compare Empedocles fr. 11, [Aristotle] MXG 2, 975 b 1,

ἔκ τε γὰρ οὐδαμ' ἐόντος ἀμήχανόν ἐστι γενέσθαι
For coming into being from that which in no way is, is inconceivable.

No doubt the principle was widely accepted. It may have been challenged by writers who refer to a being who is αὐτογενής or αὐτογέν(ν)ητος, two words rendered in LSJ as 'self-produced' and 'self-generated'. But these might refer to an eternal generation, which would not entail the emergence of something from nothing. Alternatively αὐτογενής at least might mean 'unique in kind', an

[3] R. Lorenz, Die Christusseele im Arianischen Streit', *ZKG* 1983 1–51 (hereafter 'Christusseele'), 47 n. 282; cf. G. Verbeke, *L'Evolution de la doctrine du pneuma du stoïcisme à St Augustin* (Louvain, 1945), p. 261 n. 104.

'individual species' (cf. μονογενής); it can be used, perhaps confusedly, of a being who is certainly not the primary source (see e.g. Iren. *haer.* 1.29.2, cited in PGL). However in *Orac. Sibyl.* fr. 1.17 God is αὐτογενὴς ἀγένητος, presumably 'unique and underived'. Nevertheless the principle *ex nihilo nihil* was probably robust enough to withstand such rarified objections.

Secondly, important clarifications were made by Aristotle, who notes the ambiguity of γένεσθαι, either 'coming into being' absolutely, or 'coming to be such and such'. In *De Generatione et Corruptione* 1.3, 317 b 2 ff., he appears to suggest an objection to the former concept:

εἰ γὰρ ἁπλῶς ἔσται γένεσις, ἁπλῶς ἂν γίνοιτο ἐκ μὴ ὄντος, ὥστ' ἀληθὲς ἂν εἴη λέγειν ὅτι ὑπάρχει τισὶ τὸ μὴ ὄν· τὶς μὲν γὰρ γένεσις ἐκ μὴ ὄντος τινός, οἷον ἐκ μὴ λευκοῦ ἢ μὴ καλοῦ, ἡ δὲ ἁπλῆ ἐξ ἁπλῶς μὴ ὄντος

We may translate, rather freely:

If there is a case of coming-to-be in an absolute sense, something would come to be from that which is nothing, so that it would be true to say that there are things to which 'nothing' applies; for becoming such and such proceeds from what is not such and such, e.g. what is not white or not beautiful; but absolute becoming proceeds from absolute not-being.

The absurdity lies not so much in the last phrase as in the suggestion that there are things that are not, made in the words underlined, and indeed suggested by the phrase ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων. Nevertheless Aristotle holds that nothing comes to be in an absolute sense, i.e. from what is not, for there is no such thing (cf. op. cit. 317 b 12); it is a mistake to say that not-being exists (*Phys.* 1 3, 187 a 2). And if we do say that a substance X originates from what is not X, this must be qualified as 'potentially though not actually X'; see *Gen. et Corr.* 317 b 7–26.[4]

Further clarification is offered by Aristotle's well-known theory of four causes, which sheds light on the ambiguous preposition ἐκ. The brief restatement in *Metaph.* 1 3, 983 a 26 ff., runs as follows:

τὰ αἴτια λέγεται τετραχῶς, ὧν μίαν μὲν αἰτίαν φαμὲν εἶναι τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι· ἑτέραν δὲ τὴν ὕλην καὶ τὸ ὑποκείμενον, τρίτην δὲ ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως, τετάρτην δὲ .. τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα καὶ τἀγαθόν (τέλος γὰρ γενέσεως καὶ κινήσεως πάσης τοῦτ' ἐστίν)
Now there are four recognized kinds of cause. Of these we hold that one is the essence or essential nature of a thing .. another is the matter or

[4] I myself find it unconvincing; it fits some cases, e.g. a plant emerging from a seed; but quite often if X comes into being, all that is required is the pre-existent factors which make X possible; they need not be consolidated into some supposed 'X existing potentially'.

substrate; the third is the source of motion; and the fourth is ... the purpose or good; for this is the end of every generative or motive process.

This passage was accessible to fourth-century Christian writers, as two brief paraphrases of it are given by Clement of Alexandria (str. 8.18.1 and 28.2) and another is quoted from Alexandria of Aphrodisias' *De Fato* by Eusebius (PE 6.9.1). But we shall find that anti-Arian writers were liable to ignore Aristotle's careful distinctions.

If we now return to the threefold scheme of derivation, it will be seen that Plutarch at least applies it in a manner which does not conflict with the principle *ex nihilo nihil*, since it specifies three ways in which the soul might act; in each case, therefore, the soul supplies a motive cause. And it is surely arguable that Arius' use of the scheme embodies a similar assumption. He can thus argue that the Logos is 'from nothing' without denying that he was made *by God the Father* out of nothing. Indeed this is clearly his view. Since he holds that the Logos is, in a carefully qualified sense, a creature, he can apply to him the doctrine of creation accepted by second- and third-century Fathers in opposition to the Platonist view that God made the universe out of previously existing unformed matter. And this is admitted by pro-Nicene controversialists, who object to his use of the terms 'creating' and 'making' in place of 'begetting', but nevertheless persist in claiming that Arius' use of ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων conflicts with the principle *ex nihilo nihil*, as we shall see.

2 Arius' doctrine of the Son's Origin

Arius repeatedly states that God engendered (γεννήαντα) an only Son (υἱὸν μονογενῆ); so *Urkunde* 6§2, cf. γέννημα, §3; γεννηθείς, §4, though he also describes his origination in neutral terms (ὑποστήοαντα, §2; ὑπέστη, §4), and, as commonly recognized, refers to it as a 'creation' (κτίομα, §2; κτισθέντα, §3; κτιοθείς, §4), though with a qualification designed to set him apart from other creatures (κτίομα τοῦ θεοῦ τέλειον, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς ἓν τῶν κτιομάτων, §2). The next following phrase is a tacit acknowledgement that the use of γέννημα etc. does not suffice in itself to guarantee the Son's uniqueness: γέννημα, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς ἓν τῶν γεννημάτων, a phrase which his opponents decried as inconsistent,[5] accusing him of exploiting the variable sense of γεννᾶν and its derivatives to represent the Son as a creature *tout court*, with all the pejorative implications which they themselves attached to the term. Arius does also use the term γέννημα in describing the doctrines of Valentinus and Manes (§3),

[5] Ath. *c. Ar.* ii. 19 f.

but without any clear implication that they themselves used or misused the term; thus when he says that Valentinus called the (divine) γέννημα an 'offshoot' (προβολή), it is only this latter term that he means to condemn.

All this is familiar ground. But the catalogue of opinions which Arius disowns concludes as follows: 'nor that he who was before, was afterwards generated or new-created into a Son, as thou too thyself, blessed Pope, in the midst of the Church and in session hast often condemned those who introduce these doctrines (οὐδὲ τὸν ὄντα πρότερον, ὕοτερον γεννηθέντα ἢ ἐπικτισθέντα εἰς υἱόν, ὡς καὶ οὐ αὐτός, μακάμιε πάπα, κατὰ μέοην τὴν ἐκκλησίαν καὶ ἐν συνεδρίῳ τοὺς ταῦτα εἰσηγουμένους ἀπηγόρευαας, noting that the three words underlined are omitted in Robertson's translation used above). There is, I suppose, no direct evidence that Alexander condemned any such views; but they have been plausibly identified as those of Marcellus—and, one might add, of Tertullian.[6] The doctrine that the Son was initially God's immanent Word or Reason who became Son at the creation (Tertullian) or incarnation (Marcellus) would obviously be disowned by Alexander, who viewed the Son as coeternal, but also, for quite different reasons, by Arius, who envisaged a single primordial action which brought the Son-Logos into existence, though without depriving the Father of his eternally pre-existent attributes (ὧν ἀγεννήτως ἔχει ἐν ἑαυτῷ).

The passage just considered seems to me to throw light on a debatable couplet in the *Thalia* (1–6 f., Opitz pp. 242 1–14 f.):

ἀρχὴν τὸν υἱὸν ἔθηκε τῶν γεν(ν)ητῶν ὁ ἄναρχος
καὶ ἤνεγκεν εἰς υἱὸν ἑαυτῷ τόνδε τεκνοποίησας.

This couplet, though variously explained in detail, has often been cited in support of various forms of 'promotion' theory, which agree in making it imply that the Logos attained his present dignity in two or more distinct stages.[7] The passage discussed in the last paragraph seems to me to contradict any such interpretation; indeed it may well be that the *Thalia* had already appeared when the Letter to Alexander was written,[8] and this particular couplet had attracted unfavourable comment, which Arius now seeks to disarm. The 'promotion' theory surely presupposes that the Logos was promoted 'from something', from some lower state;

[6] 'Christusseele' 26, more generally, 'Apologists and Clement'; and see A. Robertson, *Athanasius*, p. 458 n. 12; Tertullian, *Prax.* 7.

[7] *AJ* 66; R. C. Gregg and D. E. Groh, *Early Arianism, A View Of Salvation* (London, 1981), pp. 23, 96; Stead, 'Arius in Modern Research', *JTS*, *ns*, 45, (1994), 264.

[8] An early date is suggested by C. Kannengiesser, *Kyriakon*, FS Quasten, (Münster Westf., 1970), pp. 349–51; *AJ* 49 ff., esp. 51.

and the phrase ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων has the effect of denying this. But in any case the 'promotion' theory is excluded by other phrases in the letter, especially ὁ πατὴρ δοὺς αὐτῷ πάντων τὴν κληρονομίαν (§4) with its allusion to Hebrews 1:3, which couples the Son's obtaining that inheritance with his role in creating the 'ages' (αἰῶνας), no doubt before our familiar years and days began.[9]

3 'From Nothing'; Fourth-Century Interpretations

It seems to me that the phrase ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, as used by Arius and by his critics, conveys at least four distinguishable nuances, which may be listed as follows:

(*a*) The Son, being 'from nothing', is not 'from God'.
(*b*) The Son's existence had an absolute beginning
(*c*) The Son is a creature.
(*d*) The Son is not true being, is a non-entity.

Of these propositions, Arius himself would certainly deny (*a*), but would accept, with reservations, (*b*) and (*c*); (*d*) embodies a sophistry; in one sense only the Father is true Being (Exod 3:14); but his creatures possess their degrees of being as his gift.

The four propositions correspond with different senses of ἐκ, as distinguished by LSJ; (*a*) implies sense III, of origin; (*b*) suggests sense II, of time;[10] (*c*) derives indirectly from sense III; (*d*) implies sense I 4, of selection from a group.

I do not of course imply that either Arius or his critics explicitly made these distinctions; but critical discussion must begin from a clear statement of possibilities; we can then consider which implication was uppermost in the minds of its users, and so pass to the further question of how damaging it was to orthodox belief, or what degree of toleration it might have been accorded.

(*a*) This charge has been discussed by R. Lorenz (*AJ* pp. 51 f.). Arius includes the phrase ἐξ αὐτοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ υἱός in a list of Alexander's tenets which he disowned (*Urk.* 1,§2), and is said to have blamed Alexander for saying ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τὸν υἱόν, though his correspondent George of Laodicea suggests that he should have found the phrase acceptable (*Urk.* 13). But George's argument has the bad effect of implying that the Son is in no way distinguishable from the lower creation. Arius' more carefully considered *Letter to Alexander* does not discuss the phrase ἐξ αὐτοῦ

[9] A paper of mine, delivered at the *Colloquium Origenianum Septimum*, Hofgeismar-Marburg, in August 1997 adverts to the difficulties which arise from different conceptions of time

[10] See note 9 above

per se, but includes it in a list of phrases which can easily be misinterpreted: *Urk.* 6§5: εἰ δὲ τὸ 'ἐξ αὐτοῦ' καὶ τὸ 'ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἐξῆλθον καὶ ἥκω' ὡς μέρος αὐτοῦ ὁμοουσίου καὶ ὡς προβολὴ ὑπό τινων νοεῖται, σύνθετος ἔσται ὁ πατὴρ καὶ διαιρετός etc. It is reasonable to infer that Arius disliked the phrase because it had been used by heretics (Valentinus, Manichaeus, ibid. §2) in a way which suggested that the Son was emitted or projected from the Father in some physical sense. As Lorenz has rightly observed (*AJ* p. 51 n. 30), much the same point is made by Eusebius of Nicomedia in his *Letter to Paulinus*: ἐξ αὐτοῦ could be taken to suggest (ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἦν) ὡς ἂν ῥέρος αὐτσῦ ἢ ἐξ ἀπορροίας τῆς οὐσίας; he adds that the term γεννητόν might be misunderstood to imply ὡς ἂν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τῆς πατρικῆς αὐτὸν γεγονότα etc., to which much the same objections apply. Here ἐξ αὐτσῦ τοῦ πατρός is closely associated with ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τῆς πατρικῆς, taking οὐσία to mean 'material substance'.

Athanasius, however, alleged that Arius denied in the *Thalia* that the Son was ἐκ τοῦ πατρός (*c. Ar.* i.9)—a careless mistake since (e.g.) the text of the *Thalia*, which he himself transcribes in his later *de Synodis* (15.3, Opitz p. 243 l. 20), refers to the Son as τὸν ἐκ πατρὸς ὄντα. Moreover in *de Synodis* 34 he admits that his opponents described him as generated ἐκ τοῦ πατρός: cf. the 'Dated Creed' cited, ibid, c.8. In his earlier work Athanasius seems to have assumed that origination ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων excludes ἐκ τοῦ πατρός (loc. cit., οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρός, ἀλλ' ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ὑπέστη καὶ αὐτός), which ignores the variable sense of ἐκ, partly explored by Lorenz (*AJ* p. 51, 'zweierlei'). What Arius dislikes is the materializing view of God which ἐκ could suggest if taken in a spatial sense; but he makes it abundantly clear that the Son originates from the Father, and indeed by the divine will (ὑπῆρξε θελήσει πατρῴᾳ)—(Opitz p. 243, ll. 3, 5, 11 f., 19). Athanasius attacks this last point also: Arius should have said that he derives from the divine essence. But there are obvious objections to any suggestion that God's will might conflict with his essence.[11] Athanasius should have said that the Son derives indeed from his immaterial essence, in accordance with his will. The criticisms of Arius which we have just noted will not stand.

(*b*) Ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων can be taken to mean that the Son's existence had an absolute beginning; see for instance *Urk.* 4b, the letter Ἑνὸς σώματος §7: οὐκ ἀεὶ ἦν ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος, ἀλλ' ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων γέγονεν (the Word of God was not always, but originated from not-being). The first clause at least is a perfectly fair account of

[11] G. C. Stead, 'The Freedom of the Will and the Arian Controversy', in H.-D. Blume and F. Mann, (eds.), *Platonismus und Christentum, FS* H. Dörrie, (Münster Westf., 1983), pp. 256 f. (=*Substance and Illusion*, London, 1985, XVI)

Arius' teaching; see especially *Urk.* 1 5: *καὶ πρὶν γεννηθῇ ... οὐκ ἦν*, shortly followed by the defence of *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* examined above. The report in *Decr.* 5 brings the phrases closely together: *οὐ γὰρ ἦν ὁ υἱὸς πρὶν γεννηθῇ, ἀλλ' ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων γέγονε καὶ αὐτός*, and Arius' own words in the *Thalia* make his position clear:

σύνες ὅτι ἡ μονὰς ἦν, ἡ δυὰς δ' οὐκ ἦν πρὶν ὑπάρξῃ. αὐτίκα γοῦν υἱοῦ μὴ ὄντος ὁ πατὴρ θεός ἐστι λοιπὸν ὁ υἱὸς οὐκ ὢν (ὑπῆρξε δὲ θελήσει πατρῴᾳ) μονογενὴς θεός ἐστι. (Ath. *Syn* 15: Opitz p. 243 ll. 1–4)

Perhaps we should render this:

Understand that the Monad was, but the Dyad was not before it came into existence. For first, while the Son is not, the Father is God; and next, the Son who was not, but came into being by the Father's will, is God the only-begotten

My variation of 'is' and 'was' is suggested by the tense of the associated verb

We are dealing here with a straightforward conflict of views. Alexander and Athanasius held that the Son was eternally begotten, Arius that his existence had a beginning. Perhaps the more interesting debate centres on the associated phrase *ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν*, on which I have already commented in my 1964 paper. Alexander argues that the use of the imperfect tense is illegitimate (*Urk.* 14§22 f.), since it presupposes time, whereas time came into being through the Logos; likewise Athanasius, *c. Ar.* i. 14, argues that the Arian disclaimer *πρὸ χρόνων* is illegitimate, since they still acknowledge periods (*διαστήματά τινα*) in which they imagine he was not, so none the less indicating times (*οὐδὲν ἧττον χρόνους ὀηραίνοντες*) and charging God with unreason (*ἀλογία*), viz. absence of Logos. This argument can fairly easily be countered, since it is in practice impossible to avoid temporal language when one attempts to deal with eternal realities. Alexander himself has quoted *ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος* etc., and however this is to be understood, it certainly does not indicate a period of time in which the Word was in the beginning, etc. And Athanasius is particularly exposed to the *tu quoque* argument, since he refers to God creating things 'when he saw that they were capable of existing', 'when he willed, and it was expedient for them' (*c. Ar.* 1. 29). It might make sense to talk of God creating individuals, or even species, when he saw that conditions were right for them: fishes need a sea to swim in; but what external factors could suggest the right moment for initiating creation as a whole? But further discussion must be omitted, since it would have to deal at length with ancient theories of time, already discussed in my 1964 paper and elsewhere.[12]

[12] See note 9 above

(*c*) As for the implication that the Son is a creature: in terms of formal definition, this is a perfectly clear-cut issue. Since the late second century it had been generally agreed among Christians that God created all beings, both material and spiritual, from nothing. This excluded any doctrine of unformed matter existing together with God before the creation; a doctrine held, as we have seen, by Plutarch, and also by Hermogenes, who was answered by Tertullian. Since God is the sole source, it seems clear that nothing else but his creation came into being *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων*, so that the reference of *κτίοις* and *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* is identical, though their sense is distinguishable.

But problems remain; we may ask, is *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* an allowable phrase, even if we distinguish God as the 'moving cause' of creation? We have noted the variant phrase *ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος*; we know for certain that Arius himself used the former phrase, whereas the latter is attributed to the Arian party (*Urk.* 4b §7; Ath. *c. Ar.* i. 22, ii. 18). Are they really equivalent? The latter appears to signify complete absence of being. But in such a case it might seem that there is nothing which can be identified or counted, so as to justify the plural number. Taken literally *τὰ οὐκ ὄντα* should imply 'at least two nothing'!—and the singular phrase, being relatively non-committal, might seem to be preferable

We can reply by considering the context. The phrase *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* was understood, from the late second century, as excluding the theory that God brought things into being by imposing form on a pre-existent unformed matter; there are well-known arguments against making matter coexistent with God. But these would not apply to pre-existing forms of things to be created, which could be seen as existing in the mind of God. Indeed, some anti-Arian writers go further; thus Athanasius in *c. Ar.* ii. 75 quotes Eph. 1:3–5 and 2 Tim. 1:2–10: the choice of the elect was foreseen before the foundation of the world. But God can hardly have chosen the elect without foreseeing their circumstances; so it seems that God's foreknowledge must extend beyond the 'species and possibly individual things' mentioned by Origen (*Princ.* 1.4 5) to include the destinies of each individual; Origen indeed thought that (as always perfectly foreknown) they must always have existed. I cannot myself accept any such theory of total predetermination, but this is not the place for its further discussion.[13]

Yet the view that things can exist 'in idea' before (or without) attaining existence in reality seems to imply that existing is an

[13] See my *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 232–35

activity which can be exercised in various forms. It contrasts with a totally different theory of existence propounded by modern logicians, which eliminates this supposed activity and explains '*x* exists' by 'something is *x*', in which phrase the 'is' is an entirely colourless term expressing predication, as opposed to denoting an activity which *x* performs according to its nature. I have tried to explain this distinction in simple terms in my book *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity*, pp. 120–26; but I could well emphasize that neither theory can easily explain the whole range of cases in which the notion of 'existing' is used. The second theory works admirably when we wish to contrast things that actually exist with mere fictions; but it is not easy to apply to cases where something comes into existence by recognizable stages.

This point can be made without any reference to transcendental realities, or ideas in the mind of God, though it does not exclude them. We still distinguish between intellect and matter. Pythagoras' theorem, for instance, comes into being at the moment when it is conceived; if there are stages in this process, they are stages in Pythagoras' mental travail; whereas Archimedes' '*eureka*' seems to celebrate an instantaneous discovery. But a thing's coming into being may well involve both mental and material operations. A bridge might begin simply as a desideratum; it becomes a project when possible methods are suggested; models may be made to try out alternative solutions; finally the bridge is built. Before that time one might well say that the bridge did not exist. But the preliminary stages can easily be identified, for example, as 'work on the Sydney Harbour Bridge'. Per contra, we could say, 'In 1900 the Sydney Harbour Bridge did not exist', or adduce the goat-stag or the chimera as things that never could exist. In such cases there was not, or is not, anything that answers to the description, and they can be dealt with by the theory discussed above.

These remarks of course take us some way beyond the circle of ideas commonly received in antiquity, when we hear something about the mental labour of conceiving a project, but very little about the experimental testing of material devices. But the fact that extension is possible does not make them inapplicable to ancient problems. We need not suggest that a human artefact *must* begin as a project; taking Aristotle's example, a man might begin with a mass of bronze fortuitously acquired, and then decide to make it into a statue, rather than beginning with the project and then acquiring the necessary material. But if there are any priorities in God's all-perfect action, he will first conceive and then execute.

In Arian theology this principle, it seems, would apply to the Logos. 'There was'—though not 'there was a time'—'when he was not'. But from all eternity there existed in God his inseparable Wisdom, which is the prototype of his personal Logos. This would be especially clear if we could accept the reading (Ath. *c. Ar.* i.5) *ἡ οοφία τῇ οοφίᾳ ὑπῆρξε σοφοῦ θεοῦ θελήοει*.

But have we arrived at a proper analogy for God's creative work? It depends, I think, on whether we accept or deny the doctrine of total predetermination by the divine will. If we accept it, then presumably the whole concept of all future events originated without any lapse of time, though it is a concept of events to be enacted in time. But if the course of this world is at least partly undetermined, and thus allows scope for human freedom in a radical sense, we may have to say that God allows things to exist and within limits to determine their future while still exercising overall control. This at least eliminates a difficulty which might embarrass the doctrine of total divine foreknowledge. The ancients often regarded knowledge as a kind of identity of the knowing mind with the object known. But in that case, would not the divine plan collapse into total identity with the events it supposedly knows? But if determination is not all-embracing, one might suppose that God had from all eternity an outline plan of what was to be, but allowed for physical indetermination and full human freedom.

(*d*) What of the fourth possibility, or suggestion, that from the language used it follows that the Son is not true Being, or is not a true being, or is a non-entity? It depends on the exact phraseology. We have considered the legitimacy of the phrase *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* itself. What I have not so far determined is, whether it was used by Arius' opponents to imply that Arius' view made the Son one of the 'things that are not' condemned by St Paul in 1 Cor. 1:28. For the moment, I think this idea was present as no more than an innuendo. The case is rather different with the alternative phrase *τὸν μὴ ὄντα*, which is attributed to the Arian party but not directly attested in Arius' own writings. Probably our best source is *Urk.* 4b, a letter written in the name of Alexander but drafted, I believe, by Athanasius;[14] Arius is said to believe *ὁ γὰρ ὢν τὸν μὴ ὄντα ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος πεποίηκε*. Clearly the syntax allows us to translate the participle either as 'him that was not' or as 'him that is not', just as one can either make a statue, sc. out of bronze, or make bronze, sc. into a statue. The exegesis 'him who was not' makes the point already considered under (*b*), and could have been accepted by Arius; see e.g. *Thalia* 1. 20 (p. 243).

[14] See my 'Athanasius' Earliest Written Work', *JTS*, *ns*, 39, (1988), 76–91.

l. 1) *οὑνες ὅτι ἡ μονὰς ἦν, ἡ δυὰς δὲ οὐκ ἦν πρὶν ὑπάρξῃ* The exegesis 'him who is not' seems more emphatic; one might perhaps deduce it from Arius, op. cit., *λουτὸν ὁ υἱὸς οὐκ ὤν, ὑπῆρξε δὲ θελήσει πατρώᾳ, μονογενὴς θεός ἐοτι* The probable basis is that Arius refused to apply to the Son the *ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν* of Exodus 3:14. Eusebius' theology moved away from this position. In *DE* 5 3.16 (pp. 221 28 ff.) he appears to suggest this concession; but it is only in his mature *Ecclesiastical Theology* that he can say directly *εἶτ' οὖν ὁ πατὴρ λέγει εἴθ' ὁ υἱὸς τὸ "ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν", ἀληθεύοι ἄν ἑκατέρως ὁ λὸγος* (2 20.15, pp. 129.l 28 f.) Nevertheless this crucial text uses *ὁ ὤν* in a highly distinctive sense; it cannot be right to argue that if Arius denied this title to the Son, he must have regarded him as *τὸν μὴ ὄντα* in whatever sense we ourselves care to attach to the phrase.

Section 3 has shown that in the course of the Arian controversy the phrase *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* acquired various nuances which did not attach to its original use applying to created nature. All it intended to exclude was, in Aristotle's terms, a material cause; the moving, formal and final causes are not excluded. And the same will apply to the Arian Logos. The objections raised against his origination *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* are largely polemical devices. The real bone of contention was, whether Arius was right in retaining the inclusive sense of 'creation' so that every being apart from the Father himself must rank as a 'creature'.

4 'From Nothing': Perverse or Defensible?

We come, then, to a controversial and very familiar theme. I will begin with a few generalities. I do not think that Arianism should be explained as an intrusion from alien philosophy into Christian debate.[15] Moreover I think it was predominantly an Alexandrian development. But that does not imply that Alexandrian theology was a unified corpus. Origen's influence was obviously powerful; but there is reason to suspect anti-Origenistic currents.[16] Moreover Origen's own teaching is many-faceted. Notably he combined a doctrine of eternal generation with a marked subordinationism, an uneasy combination, but one familiar in contemporary Platonism. Arius wholly rejected the former, Alexander reacted strongly against the latter. Moreover they will have taken different views of the controversy between the two

[15] See my 'Platonism of Arius' (n. 1) and 'Was Arius a Neoplatonist?', *Studia Patristica* 32 (1997), 39–52 (against R. D. Williams, *Arius* pp. 181–232), and 'Platonism in Origen and Arius' (lecture at the *Colloquium Origenianum Septimum*, Hofgeismar-Marburg, 1997).

[16] See W. A. Bienert, *Dionysius von Alexandrien*, *PTS*, 21, (Berlin/New York, 1978).

Dionysii, Arius accepting the more extreme statements of the Alexandrian while Alexander tried rather inconsistently to meet the arguments of the Roman pope while maintaining an insistence on real distinctions in the Persons of the Trinity. Since the Alexandrian Dionysius was in controversy with Sabellians in Libya, it has been plausibly maintained that he fostered a marked anti-Sabellian reaction towards which Arius was drawn. Such explanations appear to me much more convincing than a supposed influence from Antiochene theology, or a debt to Paul of Samosata, while Lucian remains an enigma.[17]

It may well be, however, that in Alexandria the doctrine of eternal generation was already established (following Origen and no doubt influenced by Dionysius of Rome),[18] so that Arius was upholding a minority view. In other patriarchates his doctrine that the Son was begotten *πρὸ χρόνων καὶ αἰωνῶν* would have been thought sufficient; it was evidently acceptable to Eusebius of Caesarea, who without agreeing entirely with Arius nevertheless ventured to take his side against Alexander before his partial capitulation at Nicaea.

Where I think Arius is vulnerable is that he relied so largely on Proverbs 8:22 taken in isolation. His exposition of this text was undoubtedly correct, in that it reproduced the biblical writer's intentions, as not meaning to differentiate between 'begetting' and 'making', or deliberately contrasting their tenses, as in the LXX *ἔκτιαε γεννᾷ*. But it was a breach with tradition; Christian scholars had long puzzled over the text, and tried various means to avoid equating the two verbs.[19] The Arian arguments for equation were not notably successful; in particular, their observation that *γεννᾶν* can be used in a very general sense was taken to prove that they regarded the Son as a creature *tout court*, as no more than one of the 'drops of dew' (Job 38:28; see p. 674). But Athanasius' counter-arguments are themselves incoherent; he can argue that God's acts of creating, and again of begetting, are totally removed from human experience (*c. Ar.* i 24, 28 init.) and yet appeal to human experience to present it as a matter of course that begetting and making are two different things (ibid. 24, 29). It is difficult to avoid the suspicion that he goes far beyond most earlier orthodox Christians in emphasizing the fragility and impermanence of God's creation, in order to arouse hostility against Arius' claim that the Son is a creature; after all, the *relative*

[17] See my 'Arius in Modern Research', (n. 7), esp. 34–36.

[18] See 'Dionysius of Rome's Letter', in C. L. Feltoe, *Dionysius of Alexandria* (Cambridge, 1904), on the distinction between *γεγεννῆσθαι* and *γεγονέναι*.

[19] See esp. M. Simonetti, *Studi sull' Arianesimo*. (*VS* 5) (Rome, 1965), pp. 9–87.

goodness of the creation had been an important point to argue against the Manichees. And his argument (ibid. ii.19) that it is logically unsound to describe the Son as *κτίομα* . . *ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς ἓν τῶν κτιομάτων, γέννημα ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς ἓν τῶν γεννημάτων* is far from impressive. Theology demands an element of paradox; and surely no Nicene should object to describing Christ as *ἄνθρωπος, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς εἷς τῶν ἀνθρώπων*, remembering that for Athanasius himself he is both *ἄνθρωπος* and *οὐκ ἄνθρωπος* by turns [20]

Arius, we said, relied too largely on Proverbs 8:22 taken by itself. But when Athanasius in reply affected to define the 'scope' of Scripture as a whole, he must be accused of special pleading; as if the whole Bible were directed towards his own fourth-century problems [21] Nevertheless it is true that a great mass of important texts assign a role to the Son which Arius appeared to deny. To declare that he was *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* was a polemical statement, and a tactical error. The underlying doctrine, that the Son was not coeternal with the Father, would no doubt have been acceptable in Alexandria in the time of Bishop Dionysius, as it was in other patriarchates in Arius' own time. But Alexander and Athanasius had advanced to a new position, which they were prepared to defend with the utmost self-confidence, and with complete lack of scruple—to say nothing of Christian charity—in their treatment of their opponents. Arius' *ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων* made him vulnerable. No doubt he was protesting against crude interpretations of *ἐκ τοῦ πατρός*: but he thus appeared to deny, what elsewhere he clearly states, that the Son did originate from the Father. He repeated this statement at the end of his days in a conciliatory formula sent to Constantine (*Urk.* 30, 2). But his opponents required more than he was prepared to concede, at the same time accusing him of hypocrisy.[22] Apparently the only way to avoid the charge of hypocrisy was to commit the sin.

Arius, of course, was not wholly free from blame. Yet the Christian Church has much to deplore in its treatment of him. The carefully considered phrases of his *Letter to Alexander* attracted the same intemperate abuse as his admittedly provocative *Thalia*. Perhaps the most useful lesson we can draw is the unwisdom of befogging the minds of simple believers with expressions that are better suited to the lecture-room and the theological journal.

[20] See C. Kannengiesser, *Sur l'Incarnation du Verbe* (*SC* 199) (Paris, 1973), pp. 48–51.

[21] See my 'Athanasius als Exeget', in J. van Oort and U. Wickert, (eds.), *Christliche Exegese zwischen Nicaea und Chalcedon* (Kampen, 1992), 174–84, here pp. 177 f.

[22] See Athanasius, *Ep.* 54.2.

VIII

The Arian Controversy: A New Perspective

(Magistra, fons dulcedinis, hoc in loco desipere liceat!)

The text that I shall try to introduce to you should I think be classed as pseudepigraphical. Its historical value I judge to be slight. It is indeed written in the name of Arius, and is presumably the work of an Arian writer, or at least of one who had some measure of sympathy with the Arian cause. But it cannot have been written by Arius himself, nor indeed during his lifetime, since it clearly shows knowledge of Athanasian theology, not simply from oral tradition but as it is presented in his writings. Its evident acquaintance with the Orations against the Arians shows that the work must be dated some five or ten years after the heresiarch's death, at the earliest; and if it is seen to have used the de Synodis also, this indicates a date in the 360's as a terminus a quo. In view of the intrinsic interest of the questions in dispute I do not propose to give further attention to its provenance and transmission, but will lay it before you at once in the English version which I have prepared. It runs as follows:

The prophet of old instructed his disciple saying "My son, if thou comest to serve the Lord, prepare thy soul for trials; cleave unto him and depart not, and endure the vicissitudes of humiliation". Indeed the Lord himself said to his apostles "If a man do not take up his cross and follow me, he cannot be my disciple". Now we will not exalt ourselves above measure, or presume to compare ourselves with the apostles; but as followers of them, and of the holy prophets, and of our blessed and orthodox teachers in the Church, we have indeed suffered grievous trials at the hands of proud and self-willed men who malign our persistence in the orthodox faith. For as to the blessed Alexander, at one time our Bishop, we shall say nothing, though we grieved over his errors; for he showed us many kindnesses, and for a time was willing to listen to us and inquire peaceably, if by any means we could come together in the bond of orthodoxy. But in the end he was persuaded by evil counsellors, and those not grave and experienced men, nor many in number, but by a violent and ambitious youth whose honourable name I will not disgrace by pronouncing it, since in every place he has promoted violence and discord rather than the concord and fellowship which disposes to (ἀθανασίαν) eternal life.

Now the impious Rehoboam listened to the evil counsel of the young men after the death of his father Solomon; but this new tyrant, young though he was, accepted no man's counsel, nor did he submit himself to the wisdom of that good Solomon while he was alive; but stole his affections and usurped his authority, not waiting for that death

which was to him the opportunity for his ambition; and after the blessed Alexander fell asleep he was secretly appointed, as he claims, by some two or three confederates, and by specious words and gifts and promises, and by threats as well, he has corrupted the minds of the innocent, and now persecutes and drives away the orthodox and faithful brethren And in all this time we ourselves have done him no violence, nor have we incited others to this effect; for not even he himself has ever alleged this; but only, it may be, some of our brethren were provoked by his violence and injustice towards us, or sought retaliation for the wrongs they had suffered. But we for our part have never ceased to strive for communion and fellowship; or if the enmity shown towards us cannot be quenched, we have asked leave to occupy a place of worship where our brethren can assemble without fear or distraction, desiring only that God's holy altar and the sacred vessels and ministers of the sanctuary be not violated by men who are robbers, not givers of peace.

But though so often disappointed, by God's grace we have not been idle, but have continued to teach and expound the scriptures as our fathers have taught us. And those who are free from ill-will may judge of our faith by the things we have formerly written But since the proud man does not cease to incite our fellow-Christians against us, reviling us as madmen and blasphemers, we are moved by the divine Reason himself to come to the aid of the truth, not spewing out interminable and repetitious harangues like those of our assailant, but concisely, as Christian modesty and decency prescribe

For he has inquired in some place whether names are better than the realities they denote, or inferior to them;[1] and he goes on to complain at us for saying that God uses many words to instruct us, alleging that each word in that case must be feeble and need the help of others to correct it [2] Why then does he himself add word to word, nay rather treatise to treatise? Should he not rather follow blessed Paul, who teaches that the kingdom of God is not in word but in power? Should he not be ashamed of his inquiry, nay rather his foolish conundrum which any Grecian sophist would have despised? But if we may answer a fool according to his folly, let him learn that there are honorable names, and also names of dishonour; for as to the word 'power', no doubt the reality is greater than the word; but if we speak of 'powerlessness', then the word is greater; for the word at least has power to signify, whereas the reality is a lack of any power. So then we must distinguish between word and word, as the blessed Matthew tells us: "for by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned".[3] But you, proud bishop, or rather busybody (ἀλλοτριεπίσκοπε), do not agree, for you contradict yourself many times over, as we shall shortly demonstrate; and in one place you say that we should pay careful attention to the words, observing the place and the time and the character that is presented;[4] and again you say that the words are things indifferent and fit to be ignored when some person attends to the facts.[5] And you do not accept blessed Paul when he proclaims Christ as the power of God and the wisdom of God; for he has used two names, and thus forsooth has demonstrated the weakness of both; and you would have him say "Christ the power of God and the power of God", since it is power without wisdom that you covet and enjoy.

[1] See Decr. 16
[2] Ibid
[3] Mt. 12:37
[4] Or. c. Ar. I. 54

But I shall not fail to expose the falsity of those words which you misuse against us. For in the first place you traduce us as if we had said that Christ was a mere man; and you tax us with taking the part of the Jews and of Caiaphas and of Paul the Samosatene.[6] But first of all, we have never said this, nor is there any writing of ours which you can quote to this effect; indeed we have proclaimed him a mighty god, as you very well know, since you quote our own words in this regard [7] And we have always taught, in accordance with St. Paul, that he is the first-born of all creation, and that he was with God as a beginning, and as Wisdom was present with him, giving harmony at the creation of all things.[8] We say indeed that he was in existence before the ages and before the creation of the heavens; and you yourself know that this is our doctrine, for you acknowledge us, and Eusebius and Asterius too, as teaching that it was by his means that God created all things. You report our declaration that when God willed to create originate nature, then he first, and he alone, created one, and one alone, and called him Son and Word, that by his means all things should come into being [9] This then is your testimony; how then do you dare to slander us, who have called him God's only Son and Word, as if we reckoned him a mere man and numbered him indifferently among the creatures?

It is not on this account that we have called him a creature; for we have made clear his own proper dignity, proclaiming him "a creature, yet not as one of the creatures, an offspring, yet not as one of the offspring" [10] Now that we have called him a creature, is both reasonable and devout; nay, we are bound to do so, confirming to the truly theological Solomon, who proclaims in the person of Wisdom "The Lord created me the beginning of his ways with a view to his works; before the age he founded me in the beginning".[11] But you will not have it so; for you tell us that he was created, and yet was not a creature,[12] as if God were unable to perfect the work which he intended; and whereas Solomon says that he was created before the age, in the beginning, you vainly allege that he was installed in some new dignity quite recently, now at the end of time;[13] and after all this you revile us as if we had said that he was in some way improved or

[5] Ibid. II. 3
[6] Or. c. Ar. I. 38, II. 17; Decr. 10; Sent. Dion. 3
[7] Syn. 15
[8] Col. 1:15, Jn. 1:1, Prov. 8:30
[9] Or. II. 24
[10] Syn. 16, cf. Or. II. 19.
[11] Prov. 8:22–3
[12] Or. c. Ar. II. 45
[13] Ibid. II. 74

promoted during his earthly life, which is false; while you dare to uphold that very doctrine which you condemn in ourselves!

Now that he is coeternal with the Father, or shares with him the title 'unoriginate', we are bound in Christian duty to deny; since we have learnt from the saints that the Father himself is the beginning, and that there cannot be two unoriginates; for in that case there must be a third to mediate and distinguish between them; and if a third, then a fourth and fifth [14] So we say, framing words to the best of our ability, that he was not before he was generated. And you yourself must accept this view, since it is beyond question that the Father is prior to the Son; and even you will not be so reckless as to say that the Son can beget himself, or can beget his own Father, or (though heaven forbid such vile insinuations!) that they mutually beget one another. But we say that the Son was begotten before all ages, for the ages themselves belong to that created nature which the Father laid down with the presence and assistance of his Son. And in this you agree, even though you tax us with senseless riddles about the before and the after;[15] for you yourself declare that the Word is the Father's counsel,[16] and again that his counsel and purpose was made ready before the ages [17] Why then do you condemn us, who have but followed the Scriptures in expounding these mysteries - why, I say, do you condemn us when you yourself use the same expressions as we do?

Yet again, we have amply declared his proper dignity beyond all other creatures, enlightened by the blessed Paul, who declares him made so much better than the angels as he has inherited a more excellent name than they.[18] But this sentence does not please you, and you give to it a sense of your own, saying that no comparison is intended [19] Moreover, when you wish to deny that the Son is a creature, though exalted above all other creatures, you are not content with changing the meaning of Scripture; no, you write as if Paul had never spoken. For I will quote your very words in part, as follows: "If the Son were a creature, but not as one of the creatures because of his excelling them in glory, it were natural that Scripture should describe him by a comparison with the other works; for instance, that it should say that he is greater than the archangels.... But he is not in fact thus referred to."[20] This is what you wrote against us. What, have you forgotten Paul's words? Or do you blame him for speaking incorrectly of angels when you yourself would in your wisdom have referred to archangels? Why do you say that the Scripture does not compare him with the visible things of creation, or praise him as brighter than the sun and moon, and greater than the heavens?[21] Do you then suppose we are ignorant of the Scriptures, that you toss them out so boldly?

[14] Cf. ibid. II 26
[15] Ibid. I 13
[16] Or. II. 2
[17] Ibid. 77.
[18] Hebr. 1:4
[19] Or. I. 55-7
[20] Ibid. II 23
[21] Ibid.

For Job, and Solomon too, compare him, not even with those great lights, but with rubies,[22] pronouncing him the better. And the inspired Paul tells us that he saw a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun.[23] Now what was that light but the Lord, who spoke with him and gave him commandment? And that he is more honorable than thrones we learn from Daniel, who writes: I beheld till thrones were placed, and one that was ancient of days did sit;[24] for how shall the throne be more glorious than him that sitteth upon it?

But here is further proof of your unscrupulous deceit. Since you will not accept that the Lord is reverently to be called a creature in accordance with Scripture, you intend by every means to make the word 'creature' a term of dishonour, to make it appear that we dishonour him. And to that end you are not ashamed to disparage the works of creation; though even here you are not consistent, but contradict yourself in what you say. For we have read that God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good.[25] And in part you agree; for you speak of the order and harmony of all things which, as Wisdom tells us, indicates their maker.[26] And in your writing against the gentiles you quote David, who praises the all-embracing providence and disposition of the Word, as you explain.[27] Yet again you retract and contradict yourself, alleging that the nature of all things created is fugitive and changeable,[28] though elsewhere you affirm that each one exists and remains in its own essence as it was made.[29] And as to mankind you say that they are corruptible by nature, since they are made out of nothing,[30] supposing that they are subject to some other origin and law than the will of their Creator; and again you say that God foresaw their weakness and instability before he created them,[31] as if he were a meddlesome workman whose pride forbad him to abandon his construction even though he knew it would be bad.

Now that the rational creation is by nature changeable, of course we shall admit; for both men and the higher powers are capable of turning either towards the good or to the reverse; and what praise or merit could there be in so-called goodness if no choice is involved, and men obey their Creator blindly, like the winds and waves, or rest immovable, like stocks and stones? With good reason, therefore, we say that the Lord is changeable by nature, like every rational being; for he was not dumb and insensible, but knew how to refuse the evil and choose the good. But by the resolve of his own will he is unchangeable, as we have many times declared; moreover this good resolve of his was known to the Father himself before all ages, and he is therefore worthy to be

[22] Job 28:18, Prov. 3:15, 8:11
[23] Acts 26:13.
[24] Dan. 7:9
[25] Gen. 1:31.
[26] Or. II 32
[27] Gent. 46
[28] Or. I. 36.
[29] Or. II 19
[30] Inc. 4
[31] Or. II 77

acknowledged as the true Word and Wisdom of the Father, who also willed to beget him as Son But you make light of the Father's foreknowledge and reasonable ordinance, as it seems; and though we have declared him unchangeable through his perfection in goodness, which God foreknew, you declare that these are things of no account, and give him no greater authority than Peter or Paul or any other man. And so because of your malice towards us, or it may be through pride at being Bishop of the Alexandrians, you exalt yourself like Lucifer and dare to insult the wise foreknowledge of your own Creator.

Moreover you make it a matter of complaint that we speak of two Wisdoms, one in the Father and one in the Son, just as they are two persons and two dignities; and indeed we do not deny this, and have truly said that Wisdom came into being as Wisdom by the will of the wise God.[32] For the Father himself is the source of Wisdom and of all good things, as you doubtless agree, and of this Wisdom he has given to the Son in surpassing measure, so that he alone among God's offspring and creatures and works is honoured with the name of Wisdom. Yet in bestowing this Wisdom the Father has not deprived himself of Wisdom, perish the thought! - but he remains unchangeably wise, as he ever was, so that the Son converses with his Father as glory with glory and as Wisdom with Wisdom But you do not agree; for you say that the Son is himself the essential Wisdom of the Father,[33] so that there is nothing which the Father has kept in his own power, unless perhaps it be an inessential and inferior wisdom, but that he must borrow from his Son, like some needy householder. And though you affect to despise the fables of the Gnostics, which we also condemn, yet you portray the Father in the guise of the archon falsely conceived by Basilides, who gives rise to a son who is better and wiser than himself.[34] Nay further, if all wisdom is found only in the Son, by what means does the Father know where to seek it, that he may borrow it? Perhaps, being himself devoid of wisdom, he does not even know his own Son, but has become - which heaven forbid! - like those lustful deities of the Greeks who committed adulteries with impure women, whose deeds you have rightly condemned.[35] Into this depth of folly, then, does your heresy lead you; nay rather, of atheism; for to proclaim a God who is ignorant and indigent is to acknowledge no God at all.

Nevertheless, though sunk in such blasphemous error, you do not cease to pour scorn on our doctrine of Wisdom; for you complain that, as we expound him, he has the name of Wisdom but lacks the reality But who gave him that name, we shall ask Attend to what you have said yourself, as expressing our doctrine: "Then wishing to create us, he then made a certain one, and thenceforth named him Word and Son, that he might create us through him."[36] Now you indeed present us as speaking scornfully of "a certain one", before whom in fact we bow; but we shall not otherwise deny this

[32] Or I 5, Syn 16
[33] Syn 41.
[34] Hippolytus, Ref. VII 23 5
[35] Gent 11-12
[36] Or I 5

teaching, and we require you in turn to uphold what you have here admitted. We have shown, you have said, that it was God, the Almighty and All-Sovereign, who gave to his Word the name of Wisdom; and do you then turn back and insult that name, and say that on our showing it was given improperly and incorrectly, and that it is a name and nothing more - that very name which the wise God gave to his Only-begotten? Doubtless you have read, in the cosmogony of the godloving Moses, that the Lord God created every beast and every fowl of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.[37] Do you not see that even Adam, a weak and fallible creature as you allege, has received such authority that the names he has given persist in truth; and do you think the name which God himself has given, and not Adam, to no beast but to his Son, should be of no account? Why, even those names which human fathers bestow upon their sons to this day are valid before magistrates and governors; you yourself bear the name Athanasius; and even though you misconduct yourself and abuse us in a manner unworthy of eternal life, yet we do not deny that that is your name; then do you think it a light matter that the Father of all has named his Son after his own most precious possession, and has given him moreover the fullest measure of all that belongs to that name? But if you despise our admonition, attend once more to blessed Paul, who says that he has inherited the most excellent name;[38] and from whom did he inherit, if not from the Father, who is the first and original possessor of that name?

Now we have given many instances of your deceitfulness and double-dealing; but we shall not prolong our discourse, for we have no desire to imitate the torrent of turbulent and spiteful words which your malice, rather than your piety, has poured forth. Nevertheless one chapter shall be added, in the hope that even now you may repent and acknowledge your delusions and the injustice in which you have indulged. We on our part have said that the Word was begotten before the ages by the will and determinate counsel of the Father. But this doctrine does not please you; for you say that the Son is the offspring, not of God's will, but of his nature;[39] and you have many times described the generation of the Word, comparing it with an outpouring of (solar) radiance from the sun;[40] and that though you yourself denounce us for comparing the Lord with created things. For consider, we entreat you, what you think of these heavenly bodies. Do you believe the sun to be a thing inanimate, as some of the Greeks have declared him to be a fiery mass of stone? In that case he has neither reason nor will, and acts according to the nature that God has assigned him; and how is it lawful to imagine God's Fatherhood in the likeness of such dumb and irrational beings? Or do you consider that luminary to be a rational and logical being, as the industrious Origen has maintained? In that case it is by his will that he gives forth his rays in obedience to his Lord, and follows the dictates of his nature, as God has commanded, and as you

[37] Gen 2:19
[38] Hebr. 1:4.
[39] Or III. 65-7
[40] Ibid II 33 etc

yourself have asserted [41] So then in neither case is there a conflict between will and nature; for either there is no reason and no will, or else he wills to act according to the nature which God has assigned him; and so your comparison fails

But you, it appears, have not only spoken contrary to the plain and well-grounded evidence of the truth; you have also, as one might expect, refuted yourself by your own admissions For you have said, we repeat, that the Word is the offspring, not of God's will but of his nature; and nature, you say, transcends will [42] Now how the matter stands with the creatures we have already explained; but with regard to the Lord of all things, you yourself have declared that he is wholly simple and uncompounded, and is all essence, and that there are no accidents in him [43] Now if this indeed be the truth, as you confidently declare, it must needs follow that his dignities and titles are identical one with another, and that there is in his essence no better and worse, no before and after, but that his being consists in one equal perfection How then do you dare discriminate between his nature and his will, saying that the one transcends the other? – when truth and reason assure us that his nature is to will what is good, and his will is to express the goodness of his nature? Your doctrine is manifest folly For ourselves, we do not boast – God forbid – that we can discern the incomprehensible depths of his holiness, before whom the very angels hide their faces;[44] but we have learnt by faith to call him the God of peace, and to know that there is no unrighteousness in him;[45] and if no unrighteousness, then no injustice, no distinction, and nothing greater or less And this truth you have in part perceived, though in your haste to condemn us you have forsworn your own sound doctrine, and blasphemously denied the indivisible unity of Him who is all in all

Nay more, this unity itself refutes that opinion that you have lately begun to flaunt, namely that the Son is one in essence with the Father For if that essence is simple and indivisible, as we have shown, how can it be conveyed or distributed to another? The Word indeed has declared "All things that the Father hath are mine", signifying that the Father has given him full measure of all his dignities and glories; but in so saying he has distinguished between the Father and himself For did the blessed Iohn report him as saying "All things that I have are mine"? Or did he make the Father bestow those dignities on his own person? Yet these absurdities cannot fail to follow from your doctrine If, as you say, the divine essence is one and undivided, how can there be any that shares or partakes in that essence, so as to be coessential with the Father? For if that undivided essence is wholly communicated to another, there will be two Fathers and two Creators and two First Principles and two Supreme Beings, which is abhorrent to reason and Christian piety; but if it suffers no division or distribution, then there can be no distinction of persons, but the Father himself will be Son, and the Son himself the Father,

[41] Cf Gent 40, In illud omnia 4.
[42] Or II 2, III 62
[43] Decr 11, 22; Syn 35
[44] Rev 7:11.
[45] Rom 15:33, Hebr 13:20

even as the imprudent Galatian has declared them to be one and the same; and so by your unlawful innovations you revive the heresy of the execrable Sabellius and demolish the Church's confession of the holy Trinity – that very faith which you claim to cherish and uphold

Reflect, we entreat you, on what we have said, beseeching the Lord to restore to you a temperate and peaceable mind; put away your fury and your sophistries, and accept us even now as fellow-workers and fellow-servants Correct what we have taught, if you are able, but with judgement, remembering that both together we shall stand before the judgement seat; or if we have spoken truly, then join with us and with our orthodox fathers in confessing the sole ingenerate, the one Eternal, the only wise God, to whom Wisdom herself pays adoration

IX

KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN EUSEBIUS AND ATHANASIUS

The knowledge of God in Eusebius and Athanasius is a subject which in competent hands might form an impressive conclusion to our conference. To do it justice in a single paper is quite another matter; it opens up a wide range of enquiries, and touches on some of the most intractable problems of philosophical theology. For instance, are we to consider what can be *said* about God?—that is, what sort of human language can be so adapted as to describe the hidden and comprehensive reality which underlies our whole existence? Or should we be looking for some experience of contact with God which is necessarily so remote from our usual acts and thoughts that it cannot be described in normal terms and has to be indicated in the language of paradox? Or again, should we judge it a mistake to present these alternatives? I have suggested that knowledge of God may be conceived either in terms of rational statements or of mystical consciousness; but in pointing this contrast, I am using the categories of modern Western philosophy; we shall find, I think, that our chosen authors conceive their problem quite otherwise; their most important category being the intellect, *nous*, which implies both rational content and the directness of intuitive perception

1. We need, therefore, to find a simple down-to-earth point of departure; and I propose to begin from a well-known passage in the *De Incarnatione*, c. 12. In this chapter Athanasius enumerates the various means of knowing God which had been devised by his divine providence; previous to the Fall, it would seem, and anticipating its possibility, God provided for man's negligence: προενοήσατο καὶ τῆς ἀμελείας τούτων, ἵν' ἐὰν ἀμελήσαιεν δι' ἑαυτῶν τὸν Θεὸν ἐπιγνῶναι, ἔχωσι ... τὸν δημιουργὸν μὴ ἀγνοεῖν. He mentions first what we may call ideal knowledge, which should have been sufficient for man if he had not sinned. Next comes the possibility of recognizing the Creator through attending to the works of his creation. Thirdly, God provided for the Law and the Prophets, whose teaching is more accessible, since in that case mankind can learn from other men. But since all these means were ineffective in the face of human wickedness, God finally adopted the expedient of renewing men through the presence of his own Image, the Logos, after whom they were first created; so the Word of God came down to earth in his own person: ὅθεν ὁ τοῦ Θεοῦ Λόγος δι ἑαυτοῦ παρεγένετο, c. 13.7. There are thus four possible

ways of knowing God, if we may trust Dr. Meijering's analysis in *Athanasius contra Gentes*, p 114; though Athanasius' treatment of the third way contains a rather complicated resumptive clause and refers to the 'saints', οἱ ἅγιοι, who may possibly be Christian teachers distinct from the Prophets, the μακάριοι διδάσκαλοι mentioned in c 1 For the purpose of this paper I intend to consider only the first item on the list; I shall try to examine the ways in which Athanasius and Eusebius explain our ideal knowledge of God

2. Any treatment of the *De Incarnatione* will naturally refer to its companion piece, the *Contra Gentes*; and we must take account of a certain difference in perspective between these two works, which compare rather differently with the thought of Eusebius The divergence is especially marked in their early chapters, and it prompted a young Oxford scholar, as he then was, Dr. Andrew Louth, to draw a sharp contrast between them [1] They differ, he maintains, in the account they give of the Fall of man, but also in the assumptions they make about our knowledge of God. 'The *Contra Gentes* gives an account of man's fall from a state of contemplation to a state subject to sensual pleasures. It is a timeless account. It is untypical of Athanasius—but typical of Alexandrian theology generally—in using allegorical exegesis. *De Incarnatione* is historical, realist, and turns, not on intellectual contemplation, but on the obedience and disobedience of man.'

I agree with Dr. Meijering that this contrast is overstated In my own opinion, neither book presents a perfectly consistent picture. The case is rather, that in each of them Athanasius is drawing upon traditional themes, and selects rather different points for emphasis. But it is certainly not the case that the theology of one book contrasts *en bloc* with that of the other.

First, then, the *CG* certainly does not begin by considering the Fall of man in allegorical terms. One can see this clearly if one contrasts Athanasius with Philo. Philo repeatedly suggests that the first man symbolizes intellect, *nous*, and the first woman symbolizes sensation, *aisthēsis*.[2] But Athanasius does not tell us that the first man symbolizes anything at all; at most, we can say that he treats him as an example of a general truth. He states that God's purpose was that men should enjoy uninterrupted communion with him, and adds that this actually happened in the case of 'the first man . . who was called Adam in the Hebrew tongue;' the only hint of allegory here is a reference to the place which Moses figuratively called the Garden—τροπικῶς παράδεισον ὠνόμασεν, c. 2. Athanasius then states that men, οἱ ἄνθρωποι, neglected the contemplation of God and sought for satisfactions close at hand, in the pleasures of the body; and this again is illustrated by the case of the first man—τοῦ

[1] A. Louth, The Concept of the Soul in Athanasius' *Contra Gentes—De Incarnatione*, in: E A. Livingstone. *Studia Patristica* 13 = *TU* 116, Berlin 1975, 228

[2] Philo *Leg. All.* 1.92 2.5–8. 16, 31 38. 40, 70f etc

πρώτου πλασθέντος ἀνθρώπου—who at first attended to God and the contemplation of God, but then at the instigation of the serpent fell away. And this leads back to the general statement that in their pursuit of pleasure men began to devise various forms of idolatry and vice, where there is not the smallest doubt that Athanasius intends to describe actual practices of Egyptians, Greeks and Romans, including a reference to the Emperor Hadrian's favourite, Antinous.

Now of course the *DI* does present a rather different picture, and Dr. Louth is perfectly right in emphasizing the divine command of Genesis 2:16 and the stress on disobedience as opposed to the neglect of contemplation and pursuit of sensual pleasure. Indeed we could go further. Many readers of the *DI* find that it comes like a breath of fresh air; here at last, they think, is a straightforward biblical account, as opposed to the foggy generalities found in the *CG* and also in Eusebius. But I think we gain this impression because we have all been influenced by Augustine and his intense concentration on Romans, especially Romans 5:12, together of course with 1 Cor. 15:21–2. Athanasius does reproduce this Pauline perspective; but this is not the view of all the biblical writers The Book of Wisdom, which Athanasius uses fairly freely, considers that human wickedness results from idolatry; the creation of man is mentioned only in general terms at 2:33 and 9:2; there is no mention of Adam by name; his creation appears only incidentally at 7:1, while his fall only comes to light at 10:1 in the claim that 'Wisdom delivered him out of his own transgression.' Even St Paul in Romans *begins* with a general denunciation of human wickedness and discusses the role of the Law and the faith of Abraham before coming to Adam's transgression at 5:12–14; and this is specifically named as παρακοή first at 5:9 And of course there are other biblical traditions, including that which lays the blame on Eve.[3]

There is no call for surprise, then, if we find Eusebius writing largely in the tradition of the Wisdom writer, making general statements about human wickedness prompted by idolatry, and emphasizing the Origenistic theme of neglect and contempt rather than some single act of disobedience. The *Laus Constantini*, so far as I can discover, consistently follows this line. The *Praeparatio Evangelica* Book VII begins with a passage recalling the *CG* c. 3, in which mankind—or rather the Gentiles—are reproached for giving themselves over to bodily pleasures, and so learning to worship the sun and other heavenly bodies on which those pleasures depend; there follows a quotation of Wisdom 14:12, Ἀρχὴ γὰρ πορνείας ἐπίνοια εἰδώλων, which will recur in Athanasius, in *CG* 9 and 11. Eusebius occasionally refers to Adam by name, but hardly emphasizes his role as progenitor, or his failure and disobedience; this only appears rather incidentally at 7.18.8, τὸν δ' αὐθεκουσίῳ αἱρέσει

[3] 1 Tim. 2:14, Justin *Dial* 10 Iren. 1.30.7, 3 22 4, 5 19 1 (*sec* Massuet)

τῶν κρειττόνων ἀποπεσεῖν ... ἐντολῆς ὀλιγωρίᾳ, where the theme of neglect is still prominent. Adam, the earth-born γηγενής, seems undistinguished when contrasted with the perfectly righteous Enosh; the very name 'Adam' can symbolize τὸν κοινὸν καὶ πολὺν ἄνθρωπον (7 8.8.). In the *Demonstratio* there is no mention of Adam by name, and I think only one reference to his fall through the misuse of his free will.[4]

How does Athanasius appear by comparison? We can admit that there is some contrast between the two early works; the *CG* shows a rather closer agreement with Eusebius. But the contrast is far less acute than Louth makes out. Athanasius does not say, like Eusebius, that Adam represents the common man. Admittedly the *CG* describes the misdeeds of mankind in general, rather than a specific sin of Adam; but these general condemnations reappear quite frequently in the *DI*; the Fall is introduced by a general statement in 3.4; and although Athanasius quotes the divine prohibition of Gen. 2:16, he does not mention Adam by name until the genealogy in c. 35. The theme of idolatry, again, is still quite prominent.[5] Can one then see a contrast in that Eusebius and the *CG* dwell on the Origenistic idea of neglecting the contemplation of God rather than the specific sin of disobedience? Certainly the reference to disobedience as such are not very prominent in Eusebius; but the idea is found, e.g., in *PE* 2.6 12–15; again, the *CG* does not refer to the *parabasis* of men, and only once to their *parakoē*, c. 5. On the other hand the theme of neglect is well represented in the *DI*[5]. Men are still blamed, as in the *CG*, because they failed to devote themselves to the contemplation of God

3. This contemplation is what I have called ideal knowledge; it was enjoyed by Adam in his unfalien state. Athanasius' view of Adam is closely bound up with his exegesis of Gen. 1:26. Like Philo, he explains that the εἰκὼν is God's Logos himself; in one passage, *c. Ar.* 2.49, he designates him τοῦ ἀληθινοῦ Θεοῦ εἰκὼν καὶ ὁμοίωοις. But man was created κατ' εἰκόνα καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωστν, and the two phrases are treated as synonymous. This was a long-standing problem of exegesis; Irenaeus, Clement and Origen all offer two distinct interpretations, sometimes identifying the two phrases, sometimes distinguishing, so as to make ὁμοίωσις refer to a spiritual condition which we are to achieve by our own effort and virtue.[6] Origen puts this very clearly in *Comm. Joh.* 20.22.183,

[4] Ens *PE* 2.6.12, 7 8.8–9, 11.6.10–15; *DE* 4.6.7; but cf. *PE* 7 18.5 cited below.

[5] Ath. *DI* condemns mankind generally, 11, 15, 36, 40 etc.; idolatry. 11f., 14, 20, 30f., 40, 46; neglect of contemplation, 4.4, 5.1, 11.4, 12 1, 14 7.

[6] Εἰκὼν and ὁμοίωοις equated: Iren 3 23.2, 4 20 1, 5 1.3, 15.4; Clement *Protr.* 98.4, *Paed* 3 66 2, *Str.* 2.19; Origen *Princ.* 1.2.6, 2.10 7, 11 3, 3.1.13, 4.4.10; *Hom. Gen.* 1.13, 13.4; *Hom. Lev.* 3.2; *Sel. Ps.* 4.3; *Hom. Lk.* 39; *Comm. Jo.* 2.23.144; Eusebius *HE* 1 2.4, *PE* 3.10.16, 7.12.10, 17.3f., *ET* 1.20 8

Distinguished: Iren. 5.6.1, 16.1; Clement *Paed.* 1.3, *Str.* 2.22; Origen *Princ* 3 6 1, *Hom. Ezek* 13 2, *Comm. Jo.* 20 22 183, *Cels.* 4 30, *Orat.* 27 2; Eusebius *PE* 11 27 (?).

when he writes: κατ' εἰκόνα γεγόναμεν, ἐαόμεθα καί καθ' ὁμοίωαιν. But Eusebius I think shows a fairly marked preference for identifying the two phrases; typical is *PE* 7.18.5, τοῦτον μὲν οὖν κατ' εἰκόνα φαοί θεοῦ καὶ καθ' ὁμοίωσιν πρὸς αὐροῦ τοῦ θεοῦ ... ὑποοτῆναι, and I have found only one passage (*PE* 11.27.4) which suggests that our ὁμοίωοις is something still to be achieved.

Very likely, therefore, it was Eusebius who taught Athanasius that Adam already possessed both image and likeness. Athanasius identifies these concepts, whether he is describing the creation of mankind in general, as in *CG* 2 and 34, ἡ ψυχὴ ... καθ' ὁμοιωσιν γέγονεν, and *DI* 11, ποιεῖ τούτους καθ' ὁμοίωσιν: or that of Adam in particular, who was τέλειος κτιοθείς, *c. Ar.* 2.66, and whom God wished simply to persist in his original condition, *CG* 3, οὕτω καὶ μένειν ἠθέληοεν, with similar phrases at *CG* 34 and *DI* 4. There is no thought of ὁμοίωοις as a further perfection still to be acquired.

On this basis, Athanasius can describe man's ideal knowledge of God in highly optimistic terms in the second chapter of *CG*. We may note these points: (1) Man's creation ensures for him a knowledge of God. (2) This knowledge resides in the soul, (3) or more properly in the mind, *nous*. In either case, to exercize it, one must turn away from bodily sensations and attend to *noēta*. (4) Given this condition, the soul is self-sufficient; in its purity, it can reflect the Logos whom it resembles. These points, I believe, can all be found in Eusebius, though he states them more fully and less forcefully. Athanasius enormously improves on Eusebius; but his merit, in dealing with our present topic, lies in clarity and economy of statement rather than in originality of thought.

3.1. The first point is well stated in *CG* 2: ὁ παμβαιλεὺς Θεός, ὁ ὑπερέκεινα πάσης οὐσίας καί ἀνθρωπίνης ἐπινοίας ὑπάρχων ... τὸ ἀνθρώπινον γένος κατ' ἰδίαν εἰκόνα πεποίηκε καὶ τῶν ὄντων αὐτὸν θεωρητὴν καὶ ἐπιστήμονα διὰ τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁμοιώσεως κατεσκεύασε, δοὺς αὐτῷ καὶ τῆς ἰδίας ἀϊδιότητος ἐννοίαν καὶ γνῶσιν. We note the apparent contradition; God is said to be beyond human apprehension, in the conventional version of Plato *Rep.* 509 b; yet he has given man knowledge of his own eternity. Similar statements can be found in Eusebius; but when carefully examined, Eusebius proves to be passing on two quite distinct traditions. First, he reproduces the old apologetic assertion that *all* men are really theists;[7] this appears very clearly in *ET* 1.20 6, τὸν δὲ ἐπὶ πάντων Θεόν φυσικαὶς ἐννοίαις ἅπαντες ὁμολογοῦοιν ἄνθρωποι, which of course conflicts very sharply with the doctrine of an unknowable God. But secondly, there are relics of the tradition found in Philo of an ideal and sinless first man, incorporeal and asexual and naturally en-

[7] Minucius Felix *Oct* 19. Eusebius *PE* 2.6 11, *ET* 1.20.6.

dowed with the knowledge of God. So Eusebius writes, *PE* 7 17.3: τῶν ἐν ἡμῖν τὸ μέν τι φασὶ θεῖον καὶ ἀθάνατον, ἄσαρκον τὴν φύσιν καὶ ἀοώματον, τοῦτον δὲ καὶ τὸν ἀληθῆ τυγχάνειν ἄνθρωπον, κατ' εἰκόνα θεοῦ καὶ ὁμοίωσιν γεγενημένον: and this ideal man is sharply distinguished from the earth-born Adam of Genesis 2 and 3. Athanasius here is simpler and more consistent; Adam for him is morally perfect, but he is a man like ourselves, equipped with a body and subject to bodily desires when he neglects his vocation of contemplating God. But Athanasius again is not wholly consistent; his combination of traditions presents us with an Adam who is supposed to be perfect, but whose virtue and spirituality is in fact corruptible.

3.2 Secondly, where do we possess the knowledge of God? 'In the soul,' seems the obvious answer. Athanasius is clearly affected by the idealized view of the soul propounded in Plato' *Phaedo*, which attributes true perceptions to the soul and makes the body the source of error.[8] This view is developed in *CG* 2–4, and appears again in 31–4. God is incorporeal, and knowledge of God depends upon our dissociating ourselves from corporeal things, *CG* 2 3. Athanasius even affirms that the body 'could not consider what is outside itself—οὐκ ἂν τὰ ἔξωθεν ἑαυτοῦ λογίζοιτο—for it is mortal and transitory,' c. 32. In c. 4 he says, more reasonably, that our bodily members can be occupied *either* with reality *or* with unreality; our eyes *can* be used to admire the creation, and our ears to listen to the laws of God. But this point is soon forgotten; Athanasius continues to point out the religious benefits of our sense of sight without reminding us that our eyes are parts of the body.[9]

3 3. When Athanasius idealizes the soul, he almost invariably refers to it as the seat of reason, *nous*. The notion that man perceives God through his *nous* is especially frequent in the early chapters of the *CG*, for instance when he declares Adam κατὰ τὴν ἀρχὴν ἀναισχύντῳ παρρησίᾳ τὸν νοῦν ἐσχηκέναι πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, 2.4. Eusebius takes the same view, which of course is exceedingly common and is well represented in Philo, for instance in *opif.* 69, where the *nous* takes the place of God's image in man: ἡ δὲ εἰκὼν λέλεκται κατὰ τὸν τῆς ψυχῆς ἡγεμόνα νοῦν. The connection of soul and mind is variously represented; in their idealized state they can be simply coupled together; so Eusebius *PE* 3.10.16, ψυχὴ λογικὴ . . . καὶ νοῦς ἀπαθής: and Athanasius alludes to the Logos who sees both soul and mind, *DI* 14.4. Sometimes the mind seems to be conceived as part of the soul, or its directive part; so *CG* 34, men can ascend, ἀναβῆναι, τῷ νῷ τῆς ψυχῆς; thus the soul consorts with angels 'confident in the purity of its mind,' τῇ τοῦ νοῦ θαρροῦσα καθαρότητι, ibid. 33. Much the same view can be suggested without explicit reference to the *nous*; the phrase ψυχὴ λογικὴ is common enough in Athanasius, as it is in Eusebius; and both authors use intellectualist terms like ἔννοια, κατανοεῖν and λογίζεσθαι to indicate our knowledge of God, together with associated metaphors like θεωρεῖν and θεωρία, and the Platonic image of the *nous* as ὄμμα τῆς ψυχῆς, to which I shall return.

[8] *Op. cit.*, 64 c–67 d; cf. Eusebius *PE* 2.6.12f., 3.10.15.

[9] Athanasius *CG* 4 4 35f., 40 fin., 45; *DI* 12 3, 32 1, 45 3.

The use of the actual word ὁράω is naturally rather more restricted, but it does occur, encouraged perhaps by the quotation of Mt. 5:8, in *CG* 2: in its state of innocence, the mind is raised aloft, ἄνω μετάρσιος γίνεται, καὶ τὸν Λόγον ἰδών, ὁρᾷ ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ τὸν τοῦ Λόγου Πατέρα. Conversely, in c. 7 the guilty soul is described as καμμύσασα τὸν ὀφθαλμόν δι' οὗ τὸν Θεὸν ὁρᾶν δύναται, a biblical phrase often repeated in his later works.

Athanasius thus appears to treat the *nous*, not only as the eye of the soul, but as its only source of good impulses. I think he only once refers to other powers in the soul in complimentary terms.[10] Accordingly, as Charles Kannengiesser has observed, when Athanasius comes to speak of human corruption, it is always the soul that is involved; so *CG* 3.4, 4 4, and *DI* 11.4, ἐθόλωσαν ἑαυτῶν τὴν ψυχήν. The soul is infected when it rebels against the guidance of the *nous*, or when it neglects to keep its attention fixed on God; but there seems to be no suggestion that the *nous* itself can be corrupted. No suggestion, that is, within this particular topic of discussion; in practice, when criticizing his opponents, Athanasius is quite ready to say that their minds are unsound, οὐχ ὑγιαίνοντες, or crippled, πεπηρωμένοι, or perverse, διαστρέφεσθαι;[11] and there is a mention of the corrupt *nous* of 2 Tim. 3:8 in the Letter to Adelphius, c. 1.

But the optimistic view of *nous* is reflected in what Athanasius says about *noēta*; these are always presented as ideal realities and truths—which indeed is the normal use of the term. In the *CG* 4 there seems to be no distinction drawn between ἀποστῆναι τῆς τῶν νοητῶν θεωρίας and ἀποστῆναι τῆς πρὸς τὰ καλὰ θεωρίας, and both these phrases seem to be equivalent to the ἀποστρέφεσθαι τὴν πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν θεωρίαν of *DI* 15.1, or indeed ἀποστρέφεσθαι τὸν Θεόν, ibid. 11.4.

3.4 A specially striking phrase which appears at the end of *CG* 2 claims that the purity of the soul is capable of reflecting God through itself as in a mirror: ἱκανὴ δὲ ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς καθαρότης ἐστὶ καὶ τὸν Θεὸν δι' ἑαυτῆς κατοπτρίζεσθαι. This brings together three suggestive ideas: (a) the self-sufficiency of the soul, (b) its purity, and (c), the metaphor of the mirror.

(a) The self-sufficiency theme recurs in c. 30, slightly modified by biblical texts which limit its application to Christians, who have faith and have the kingdom of God within them. In c. 2 the claim is far bolder; the context sug-

[10] Ἐπιθυμία condemned *CG* 34 al.; with θυμός, *Vit. Ant.* 21 init; contrast *Ep. ad Marc.* 27, *PG* 27. 40A.

[11] Soul corrupted. *CG* 3 4, 4 4, *DI* 11.4. Mind corrupted, *Decr.* 21, *Dion.* 12 3, c. *Ar.* 1 2.

gests that the soul's power of rising above perceptible things, which the body desires, and consorting with itself—ἑαυτῷ συνών—makes it capable of uniting with the divine and intelligible realities in heaven, just as Adam 'associated with the saints in the contemplation of intelligible reality,' ἐν τῇ τῶν νοητῶν θεωρίᾳ. Athanasius appears to draw no distinction between the soul's contemplation of the *noēta* and its contemplation of the Logos, in whom the Father himself can be seen.

(b) The theme of purity in the soul is of course a very common one, which indeed Athanasius has already mentioned earlier, in *CG* 2. There is a biblical basis in Wisdom 7:24, though strange to say the noun καθαρότης occurs only once in the New Testament, where it refers to the flesh, and not at all in Philo. Purity is closely associated with knowledge; so Eusebius *DE* 4.8.3, νῷ διαυγεῖ καὶ ψυχῇ κεκαθαρμένῃ, followed by Athanasius *Decr.* 24, καθαρᾷ τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ μόνῳ τῷ νῷ. More exactly, both authors associate purity with the so-called 'eye of the soul,' which needs to be cleansed in order to contemplate reality: the ὄμμα τῆς ψυχῆς of Plato *Rep.* 508, 533 d. Plato speaks here (and at 540 a) of redirecting or of training the eye; but the metaphor of cleansing is used at 527 d and is again suggested when he speaks of removing accretions from the soul, ibid. 611. The metaphor is used by Eusebius at *PE* 2.4.4 and again at 2.6.12, διανοιᾶς ὄμμασι κεκαθαρμένοις ... συνενόησαν. Athanasius imitates this phrase with the slight rewording ὀφθαλμὸς τῆς διανοίας, *CG* 27, *DI* 30, and the metaphor of intellectual vision is quite elaborately developed in *CG* 34 and *DI* 57, where Dr. Meijering aptly compares Plotinus 1.6.9; the eye cannot see the sun unless it becomes sunlike.

(c) Athanasius associates the pure eye of the soul with the metaphor of a mirror, κάτοπτρον, *CG* 2, 8, and 34. This has a complex history, which includes Wisdom 7:26, where the word is ἔσοπτρον: Philo *migr.* 98, which shows that the comparison of the soul to a mirror, κάτοπτρον, was an accepted commonplace in his day; and St. Paul, especially the much discussed phrase in 2 Cor. 3:18, ἀνακεκαλυμμένῳ προσώπῳ τὴν δόξαν τοῦ κυρίου κατοπτριζόμενοι. Scholars have been unable to decide whether κατοπτριζόμενοι means 'beholding' or 'reflecting'; the verb is something of a rarity, though it occurs in Philo *L.A.* 3.101, where the sense 'beholding' is the more natural. Bettter evidence can be found in Christian authors, who are naturally drawn to the arresting phrases of St. Paul. Meijering refers to Theophilus and Clement; of whom Theophilus undoubtedly provides the closer parallel, since he connects the mirror with cleansing our eyes so that we can see the sun (*Aut.* 1.2; cf. *CG* 34, *DI* 57). In my opinion, however, the most important parallels are found in Gregory Thaumaturgus and in Eusebius. Gregory describes the soul learning to contemplate itself as in a mirror and thus beholding the divine mind: αὐτῆς τῆς ψυχῆς ἑαυτὴν ὥσπερ ἐν κατόπτρῳ ὁρᾶν μελετώσης, καὶ τὸν θεῖον νοῦν ... ἐν ἑαυτῇ κατοπτριζομένης (*pan. Or.* 11.142). Eusebius quotes a passage from

the *First Alcibiades* of Plato (p. 133, at *PE* 11.27.5) where the full text adds some suggestive new touches to the comparison. The eye itself is a mirror, since one can see things reflected in the pupil of the eye (133 a); in fact, says Socrates, the eye can only see itself in some such way; nevertheless there are better mirrors available (133 c); likewise, although the soul itself is a mirror in which it can see itself, the purest and brightest mirror is the god who is present within it. We shall criticize this reasoning a little later; for the moment, we note that this passage suggests, more clearly than most, that there is an identity between the observer and the reflecting medium. I think we can conclude that there is no point in discussing the precise significance of κατοπτρίζεσθαι in 2 Cor., since the whole comparison turns on the claim that the soul can observe itself as in a mirror. It follows that the soul, as observer, sees itself, but the soul, as observed, reflects itself. Both senses are perfectly appropriate. *Cadit quaestio.*

3.5. As a footnote to what I have called the optimistic theory, we need to note a contrasting perspective which comes into view in the *DI*. Two points we have noted so far are the natural purity of the soul expounded in *CG* 2, and the suggestion that the crucial move in attaining a knowledge of God is the ascent from *aisthēta* to *noēta*. On the first point, the *DI* seems to present a sharp corrective, in cc. 3–4 and 11–12. Here the whole human race is seen as handicapped by its created and its corporeal nature, which make it incapable of continuing in existence, let alone attaining a conception and knowledge of God, without special assistance; so that their share in God's image results from an additional act of pity (ἐλέησας) independent of their creation (πλέον τι χαριζόμενος, c. 3). As in the *CG*, they have an ability which is sufficient, αὐτάρκης, to provide the knowledge of God; but in the *DI* this is not the natural purity of the soul, but a special gift of grace, ἡ κατ' εἰκόνα χάρις (c. 12), designed to offset its inherent weakness. As to the second point, it seems that in the *DI* Athanasius simply loses interest in the *noēta*; they are not mentioned; in fact there are only two further references to them, it appears, in all Athanasius' personal output.

It would be very easy to interpret this contrast as a divergence between the two works, assuming a more Platonic standpoint in the *CG*, perhaps inspired by Eusebius, as against a more biblical perspective in the *DI*. But this would be a serious mistake. For first, the theme of human incapacity is clearly stated in the *CG* itself, in c. 35: God is above all created being, whereas the human race was created from nothing, so that they were liable to be deprived (ἀτυχεῖν) of knowledge of him. And this theme of natural incapacity is already foreshadowed in Eusebius; see for instance *DE* 4.6.6, the Father appointed the Logos ὡς ἂν μὴ παντελῶς ἡ τῶν γενητῶν ἀποπέσοι φύσις, δι' οἰκείαν ἀτονίαν καὶ ἀδυναμίαν τῆς ἀγενήτου καὶ ἀχωρήτου πατρικῆς οὐσίας διεστῶσα. Similar teaching is found in the *Laus Constantini*, which of course I would not

claim was prior to the *CG*; in contrast to the divine being, human nature was ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων προβεβλημένη πορρωτάτω τε διεστῶσα καὶ μακρὸν τῆς ἀγεννήτου φύσεως ἀπεσχοινισμένη (c. 11). This contrast is a mere commonplace, and is probably more typical of Eusebius than the theme of ideal human innocence, which, we have seen, is not represented by the earth-born Adam, and is later displayed only occasionally by virtuous heroes like Enosh.

As for the status of *noëta*, there are favourable estimates to be found in Eusebius, as at *PE* 3.10.11, where he argues that even the works of God's creation are ομικρὰ ἔτι καὶ βραχέα, ταῖς ἀσωμάτοις καὶ νοεραῖς οὐσίαις παραβαλλόμενα. But there are two striking passages at least where he puts the opposite case; at 11 21.6, expounding Plato *Rep.* 509 b, he claims that the νοηταί οὐσίαι derive their being from the transcendent Goodness, ὥστε μὴ ὁμοούσια αὐτὰ τίθεσθαι, ἀλλὰ μηδὲ ἀγέννητα νομίζειν. At 13 15.3 he complains of Plato's inconsistency, in first making the intelligibles ἀγενήτους, but then saying that they derive by emanation from the first cause: οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὄντος αὐτὰς γεγονέναι διδόναι βούλεται.

Thus what we provisionally noted as new points in the *DI* are in fact anticipated in Eusebius. But I do not wish to argue that Athanasius introduced corrections as a result of reading Eusebius. It seems to me more likely that both writers are inconsistent because they reproduce conflicting items of traditional teaching without noticing the disharmonies that modern scholars detect.

4. We have tried to describe the teaching of Athanasius and Eusebius on our knowledge of God, with frequent quotation from both writers. But to complete the picture, we need to stand back a little and ask ourselves how much we have learnt, and what questions still need to be asked. Granted that we have a share in God's image, the Logos, how is this εἰκών, or more properly the state of being κατ' εἰκόνα, manifested in our minds, and what effects does it produce?

4.1. This teaching is clearly built on the traditional maxim that like is known by like. I have not yet discovered an explicit statement of this general principle either in Origen or Eusebius or Athanasius; but it is clearly presupposed by a phrase we cited from *CG* 2, διὰ τῆς πρὸς αὐτὸν ὁμοιώσεως; and it underlies the striking illustration of *DI* 57, where Athanasius claims that in order to look at the sun one must cleanse the eye so that it becomes bright; in the background is Plato's theory of vision propounded in *Timaeus* 45, as well as the passage cited by Dr. Meijering, Plotinus I.6.9, Posidonius in Sextus 7.93, and Irenaeus 4.36.6.

As a theory of vision, this is plainly mistaken. Good sight requires good clear eyes, rather than eyes which resemble their objects. It is no advantage to be dim-sighted if one is trying to decipher faded and illegible writing. But in the intellectual and moral field there is rather more to be said for the theory;

one cannot appreciate intelligence unless one is in some degree intelligent, or unselfishness if one is wholly self-regarding. And we can appreciate the mistakes and confusions of other people, not indeed by simply sharing them, but by intelligent reflection on our own.

Origen does indeed suggest that we can learn something about God simply by reflecting on the nature of the mind, *ex nostrae mentis contemplatione*; the mind has no need of space in which to move, or of physical magnitude, or of visible appearance (*Princ.* 1.1.6–7). This claim suggests a purely theoretical consideration, a psychology, for which good moral dispositions are not required; but it is generally taken for granted that the use of the intellect implies a detachment from bodily concerns and an attachment to pure and intelligible virtues; thus Origen continues: *quod propinquitas quaedam sit mentis ad deum, cuius ipsa mens intellectualis imago sit, et per hoc possit aliquid de deitatis natura sentire, maxime si expurgatior sit a natura corporali.* Rather similar indications are given in *Cels.* 7.33.

The modern critic may well be surprised to learn that the mind can apprehend theological truth by mere discursive reflection on itself and its activities; he might argue, moreover, that the Fathers held that God is perfectly simple; thus on the principle that like is known by like, they *must* have recommended some form of simplification or concentration of thought such as was advocated by Plotinus. There are indeed some passages which might allow this interpretation, such as *CG* 2; but on the whole I think the texts do not encourage it. The Fathers worked mainly with a fairly simple antithesis of body and mind. If sensual thoughts are discarded and the mind be occupied with itself and its own proper objects, they make no further demand. I have found no texts of our period which clearly suggest that some intellectual pursuits should be embraced and others avoided. And their doctrine that the Father must be approached through the Logos would seem to exclude any depreciation of expressed and formulated thought in favour of a Plotinian simplicity of formless contemplation.

Does the mind's likeness to God entitle us actually to describe God as mind? This was a much debated problem. On the whole, Origen accepts this view; God is *intellectualis natura simplex*, *Princ.* 1.1.6, as rendered by Rufinus.[12] Eusebius is more cautious, and reveals his hesitations at *PE* 3.10.3–4; one must not think of God as a kind of directive mind residing within the world. However at *ET* 2.17.4 he appeals to the commonplace that the human mind is mysterious, though its operations are familiar.[13] This enables him to say, surprisingly, that God's Logos is comprehensible to all men, τοῖς ἐκτος

[12] God as Mind, Origen *Princ.* 1.1.6 a., Eus. *PE* 3.10.14, but cf. ibid. 10.3.

[13] Mind mysterious, though its actions familiar: Philo *LA* 1.91, *Mut. Nom.* 10, *Somn.* 1.30.56; Eus. *ET* 2.17.4.

πάσιν καθίσταται γνώριμος, while he refers to the Father as τόν ἀφανῆ καὶ ἀόρατον νοῦν. This tradition, however, does not make even the Father completely unknowable; as we have observed, he can be 'seen' by the transcluscent mind and soul; as Athanasius puts it, καθαρᾷ τῇ ψυχῇ καὶ μόνῳ τῷ νῷ.[14]

4.2. If we now ask, what sort of activity will enable us to receive virtue and wisdom, the answer would seem to be, by meditating on their celestial prototypes conceived on the model of Platonic Forms, but also vaguely personalized and sometimes assimilated to the angels. In other words, it is usually a contemplative devotion that is required, with practical good works thrown in as a laudable but regretted interruption. There is seldom any suggestion that we might profitably imitate the Logos in his creative and providential functions; our authors never suggest that the artist or craftsman may gain a distinctive knowledge of the Logos through the exercize of his professional skill; the painter in particular remains a source of literary metaphors rather than a respected fellow-traveller on the heavenly road. Regarded in this light, is there not after all something to be said for what we all instinctively detest, namely the sycophantic comparisons which Eusebius draws between the Logos and the Emperor?

4.3. We have referred to the imagery of the mirror. Athanasius teaches that man, in his original state of innocence, can gain knowledge of the Logos by considering his own mind, an activity which we still refer to as reflection or introspection. It is of course misleading to think of self-awareness as a kind of sense-perception; as the ancients clearly recognized, each of our senses has its own distinctive sense-qualities; see for instance Origen *Princ.* 1 1.7; but self-awareness can involve them all. Sometimes, it may be, I take notice of my own visual experience; but alternatively, I may catch myself recalling a melody; the idea that I *see* what is going on within my mind is obviously absurd in the latter case, so it should be excluded also in the former.

On the other hand, it was a commonplace that sight is the best of the senses; and it is often used metaphorically for other kinds of knowledge. Visual metaphors turn up in the most unexpected places. One example is the statement found in the *CG* that we have a φαντασία θεοῦ. In this context φαντασία must of course indicate a true impression, a sense which the PGL does not record;[15] it occurs five of six times in the *CG* (c. 2 twice, 7, 9, 45) but elsewhere in Athanasius only at *c. Ar.* 2.78, conjoined with τύπος, as the image of himself which the divine Wisdom impresses on creation. But I have found two examples in Eusebius (*PE* 7.17.5, *LC* 4) and it is not uncommon in Philo; an especially interesting parallel is *Mut. Nom.* 3, τὸ δεχόμενον τὴν θείαν φαντασίαν τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἐστιν ὄμμα, and *LA* 3.61 takes the self-exculpation of Eve in Gen. 3:13 to mean that the sense-qualities, symbolized by Eve, are trustworthy, whereas pleasure, the serpent, is a deceiver. Visual symbolism is very commonly used in discussing the knowledge of God, and if we wish to find in Athanasius an acceptable use of it, we must somehow discount the misleading implications of the idea that the mind sees itself. Some writers indeed maintain the opposite view, perhaps alluding to Socrates' parable of the eye seeing its own reflection; for of course, although the eye can see itself reflected in *an* eye, it cannot see itself reflected in itself, unless we imagine that it is reflected three times in succession. Hence, it was said, the eye can see everything else, but not itself; similarly the mind can know everything, but not itself (Philo, *LA* 1.91). This tradition is reproduced in those writers who hold both that God is mind, and that God is unknown.

Nevertheless we should not underestimate Athanasius. He is admittedly limited by the idiom of his own time; but we must not think that every inconsistency is a sign of incompetence; we must allow for deliberate paradox, or perhaps rather the willing acceptance of traditional paradox; an example, I think, is *CG* 2, where Athanasius in effect tells us that the soul can rise above itself by remaining within itself: ὅτε ὅλος ἐστὶν [ἀνω] ἑαυτῷ συνων . . . τότε δὴ . . . ἄνω μετάρσιος γίνεται.

Eusebius again tells us (*PE* 7.17.5) that man was created in the image and likeness of God μετὰ τινος διαφερούσης ὑπεροχῆς, as compared with the animals: διὸ καὶ θεοῦ ἐννόιας εἰς φαντασίαν ἰέναι σοφίας τε καὶ δικαιοσύνης καὶ πάσης ἀρετῆς ἀντιλῆψεις ποιεῖσθαι, and then after recalling the story of our transgression (ἐντολῆς ὀλιγωρία, πλημμελεῖν, ἀποφάλλειν) he adds: διὸ χρῆναι τὸ καθαρὸν αὖθις καὶ τὸ θεοείκελον ἀνακτῆασθαι τῆς ἐν ἡμῖν νοερᾶς οὐσίας.

The basic theory of our knowledge of God is, I believe, very simple. It is that in a state of innocence we have an idea of God, as Father or Ruler or Supreme Being, and we possess virtues such as wisdom and justice, implanted by God's Logos, which we also attribute to God, thus giving content to our basic ἔννοια. But the theory is complicated, partly by the confusing influence of the notion that the mind can *see* itself, and so *see* reflections of the divine Logos; and partly by the confusions attaching to the phrase νοερὰ οὐσία. For it seems that a thing can qualify to be νοερὰ οὐσία simply by being, as we should say, mental or psychological in character. On this interpretation, very little is gained if we say that our human virtues are νοεραὶ οὐσίαι; this *could* mean that they are mere illusions. But Eusebius and Athanasius will think that we only recognize these virtues by relating them to their divine archetype; hence to see them within ourselves is also to be carried beyond ourselves to the realm of *noēta*, the objective and eternal Forms of all things. But even this is not the end of the

[14] God knowable by mind: Ens. *DE* 4.8.3 (?), *PE* 3.10.18; Ath. *Decr.* 24.

[15] Φανταοία reliable (*tacet* PGL!): Philo *Opif.* 166, *LA* 3.61, *Heres* 119, *Mut. Nom.* 3; Eus. *PE* 7.17.5, *LC* 4; Ath. *CG* 2.2 (twice), 7.3, 9.2, 45, *c. Ar.* ii.78. This usage is common in Greek philosophy; see *LSJ*.

story, at least for Eusebius. For it is possible to see these *noēta* as created beings, comparable with the angels, but not *homoousios* with God. And Athanasius passes quite easily from the thought of τοῦ νοῦν ἐσχηκέναι πρὸς τὸν Θεόν to that of συνδιαιτᾶσθαι τοῖς ἁγίοις ἐν τῇ τῶν νοητῶν θεωρίᾳ, which seems to suggest that unfallen man can associate with the angels in the contemplation of a higher reality. Wisdom and Justice, then, are the created prototypes of human virtues, sometimes depicted as the trees of the first intelligible paradise; but they are also ἐπίνοιαι of the Logos himself, who is αὐτοσοφία and αὐτοδικαιοσύνη.

In conclusion, I return to the problem which I raised at the beginning. My tentative opinion is that the ideal knowledge of the Logos, as described by Eusebius and Athanasius, is *not* based on any recognizably mystical experience, such as we detect in Philo and much more clearly, say, in Gregory of Nyssa. The evidence, which might suggest this is, I think, inadequate. Athanasius does of course recommend detachment from the body and its concerns; he is an enthusiast for the solitary life, as practised by Anthony; and he endorses the traditional theme that God is inexpressible and incomprehensible. But he makes no reference to the divine darkness of Sinai, such as we find in Philo and is creatively developed by Gregory of Nyssa. His ideal monk is no quietist, but is actively involved in noisy and troublesome encounters with demons. And it is interesting to note that he reinterprets Plato's maxim about philosophers practising death [16] Plato thinks that philosophers should disregard the body and attend to the intelligible world, just as if they were finally freed from the body's distractions. Athanasius of course reproduces this idea; but he understands Plato's maxim as an injunction to prepare for martyrdom, which he regards almost as a social activity, so much stress is laid on the great company of ones fellow-sufferers for Christ. The encouragment to concern oneself with *noēta* suggests to me, not a distinctively mystical consciousness, but something much more like the traditional catholic practice of meditating on the cardinal virtues. And lastly, we should not build too much on his admission that the divine nature is inexpressible, for inexpressible knowledge is more commonplace than we are apt to suppose. Origen tells us that we can distinguish between tastes, though we have no words to describe them. Indeed even a dog can know the way to Larissa, if that is where his master lives; though to be sure, he cannot know that it *is* the way to Larissa! It may, then, be a necessary condition for knowledge of God that it be inexpressible; but it is certainly not a sufficient condition. This estimate of Athanasius, and of Eusebius too, may perhaps be criticized as robbing them of a distinction with which we would like to invest them; but it has the advantage of bringing them closer to realms of thought which we ourselves can understand.

[16] *Phaedo* 64 A, 67 E, 81 A; Ath. *Dl* 27 3, 28 1. Cf. Philo *Gig.* 14, *Det.* 34, Iren. fr. 11, Clement *Str.* 3 17 5, 4 58 2 (which anticipates Athanasius' literalist interpretation), 5 67 2.

X

ATHANASIUS' EARLIEST WRITTEN WORK

In 1844 the work of J. A. Möhler, *Athanasius der Grosse*, was published at Mainz; and on p. 174 of that work Möhler expressed the opinion that the letter Ἑνὸς σώματος attributed to Bishop Alexander of Alexandria was in fact drafted for him by Athanasius. This opinion received favourable notice both from John Henry Newman and from Archibald Robertson,[1] and I have long considered it probable; yet it seems not to have been widely accepted, and the letter has been quoted as the work of Alexander by a succession of distinguished scholars including Eduard Schwartz,[2] Gustave Bardy,[3] Hans Lietzmann,[4] Manlio Simonetti,[5] John Kelly,[6] Rudolf Lorenz,[7] and Timothy Barnes,[8] to name only a few. I propose to argue the opposite case, in agreement with Möhler; I claim that the Athanasian authorship of Ἑνὸς σώματος is not merely probable, as Möhler, Newman, and Robertson affirmed, but demonstrably certain. It can thus be regarded as Athanasius' earliest written work.

My argument will take the following form. First, I shall submit that the two letters attributed to Alexander, the encyclical Ἑνος σώματος and the longer letter Ἡ φίλαρχος addressed to another Bishop Alexander, cannot possibly have come from the same hand; they differ in style, in vocabulary, and again in their treatment of their Arian opponents. Secondly, it will be shown that the style, the vocabulary, and the treatment of Arianism in Ἑνος σώματος are perfectly consonant with the undisputed works of Athanasius, while those of Ἡ φίλαρχος are utterly different. I shall assume that Ἡ φίλαρχος is in fact the work of Alexander; there is no substantial reason to doubt this, and *pro tanto* it is confirmed by the doctrinal letter produced by the Synod of Antioch early in 325. Eduard Schwartz, who has given us its Syriac text and made a retroversion into Greek, describes it as reflecting the theology of Bishop Alexander.[9] He must mean that of Ἡ φίλαρχος, as Ἑνος σώματος is almost devoid of positive theological statements. It is a surprising fact that a document issued at Antioch at the instance of the Western

[1] Newman, *Historical Treatises*, p. 297; Robertson, *Athanasius* (NPNF), p. 68.
[2] *Ges. Schr.* 3. 127=*NAG* (1905), p. 265.
[3] *Lucien*, p. 246 *al.*
[4] *Gesch. d. alten Kirche* 3. 98=ET (*Constantine to Julian*) p. 110.
[5] *La Crisi Ariana*, p. 44; *Studi sull' Arianesimo*, p. 111.
[6] *Early Christian Doctrines* (5th edn., 1977), p. 224.
[7] *Arius Judaizans?*, p. 47.
[8] *Constantine and Eusebius*, p. 203.
[9] *Ges. Schr.* 3. 154. However, the resemblance largely rests upon a common use of Alexandrian credal formulae. Luise Abramowski has noted that the Antiochene letter suppresses Alexander's allusions to three hypostases: *ZKG* 86 (1975), p. 364 n. 35.

Bishop Ossius of Cordoba sets out a theology that is unmistakably Alexandrian; and this can hardly be explained unless it be seen as expounding the views of the Patriarch himself.

Before drawing the contrasts I have mentioned, it will be convenient to give a brief description of the two letters. Ἡ φίλαρχος is roughly three times as long as Ἑνὸς σώματος: it occupies 286 lines of type in Opitz' edition, as against 92; it is divided into 60 sections, as against 20. In making this comparison I have, of course, ignored the list of signatures appended to Ἑνος σώματος. The structure of this letter is notably compact and logical, that of Ἡ φίλαρχος rather more diffuse and repetitive; nevertheless there is some overall similarity. Ἑνος σώματος can be be divided into six parts, as follows: (1) Initial greetings and justification of the letter, §§1–2; (2) Description of the heretics, §§3–6; (3) Summary of Arian teaching, §§7–10; (4) Protest leading to refutation, §§ 11–15; (5) Comparison with other heresies, §§ 16–19; (6) Request to refuse communion, § 20. The longer letter is made up as follows: (1) Initial greeting, a single line only; (2) Description of the heretics, §§1–9; (3) Summary of their teaching, §§ 10–14; (4) Refutation of their teaching, §§15–25; (5) Statement of anti-Arian theology, §§26–34; (6) Comparison with other heretics leading to further positive statements, §§35–40; (7) Refutation of their criticisms of Alexander, §§41–45; (8) Concluding statement in credal form, §§46–54; (9) Request to refuse communion, §§55–60.

1 1. How do the two letters compare in style? It seems to me that there is an obvious contrast, which it is surprising that so many scholars have overlooked. The language of Ἑνὸς σώματος is notably spare and economical, while that of Ἡ φίλαρχος betrays a deliberate pursuit of grandiloquence. How can this be demonstrated? First I observed that Ἡ φίλαρχος uses far more polysyllables, and compared them simply by noting the number of syllables per word in a sample of 1,000 words, chosen so as to give equal treatment to each document, which in fact includes most of Ἑνὸς σώματος, ending in the middle of §17, and about a third of Ἡ φίλαρχος, ending in §19. This is a crude method, as I shall shortly explain; nevertheless, the results are significant. If one defines long words as those having five or more syllables, Ἡ φίλαρχος proves to contain 83 long words out of 1,000; the figure for Ἑνὸς σώματος is 36.

I shall not build too much on this result, since the Greek language is such that quite unsophisticated writers often use polysyllabic nouns, like εὐαγγέλιον, or verbal forms, like ἀφεθήσεται. The figure for the beginning of St Mark's Gospel is 45 per 1,000. Moreover, most writers will vary their style; for instance, the beginning of a treatise often calls for a formal introduction in which more long words are used. Thus the figure for the beginning of Athanasius' *De Incarnatione* is 51, and that for the First Oration against the Arians, its opening section, no less than 66; whereas a sample taken from the same Oration beginning at Chapter Seven gives the figure 39, closely comparable with the 36 of Ἑνὸς σώματος. St Athanasius undoubtedly varied his style in the course of a single work, as Charles Kannengiesser has shown in his fine book on the *Contra Arianos*; it will be more profitable, therefore, to consider the vocabulary of the two letters in detail.

1. 2. Here, though, we can again use mathematical means. Taking the same two samples of 1,000 words, I attempted to determine how many do not occur in the undisputed works of Athanasius. For this purpose I used Guido Müller's *Lexicon Athanasianum*, discounting those works which are generally considered inauthentic, notably the *Contra Apollinarem* and the *De virginitate*, while taking account of the undoubtedly Athanasian *Epistula ad Marcellinum*. I found that Ἡ φίλαρχος exhibits 36 non-Athanasian words in the first 1,000; the figure for Ἑνὸς σώματος is arguably 7, a disproportion of 5 : 1.

The latter list is short enough to be worth considering in detail. First of all, a purist might point to §4, where Athanasius describes Eusebius as casting envious glances at the church of Nicomedia, ἐποφθαλμίοας τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ Νικομηδέων. This phrase has well-known parallels in the *Apologia c. Arianos*, 6 and the *Historia Arianorum*, 7, but the word used there is ἐποφθαλμιᾶν; strictly speaking, ἐποφθαλμίζειν does not belong to Athanasius' known vocabulary. But I shall disregard this case; a simple emendation would give us ἐποφθαλμιάσας and make the verbal parallel exact; but even without it the agreement in thought seems to me more significant than the minor variant in wording.

The next item is the word συνακολουθεῖν in §11. This is a New Testament word, found in Mark 5: 37 and 14: 51, Luke 23: 49. Athanasius will certainly have known it, and its absence elsewhere can hardly be significant.

In the same section occurs the word συμφώνοις in an allusion to 2 Cor. 6: 15; οὐδὲ συμφώνοις Χριστοῦ πρὸς Βελίαρ. This is one instance which counts against the case which I am trying to establish, since the same Pauline verse is quoted in Ἡ φίλαρχος at §30. But of course my submission is that two different authors are at work; I do not have to show that there is no influence of one upon the other.

The next instance is the verb βύειν in §12. This is clearly a word which belongs to common speech, and which any writer would use on occasion, but which will not occur very often. It is found in the Septuagint, Ps. 57: 5, and in Ignatius, *Eph.* 9: 1. Athanasius will undoubtedly have known it, and its absence elsewhere is easily explained.

The adjective ἁρμόδιος is not found in Athanasius' undisputed works: however, its adverbial form ἁρμοδίως occurs in *Contra Gentes*, 31.

The verb χριοτομαχείν also has no parallel, though the adjective χριστομάχος is very frequent in Athanasius, besides occurring elsewhere in Ἑνός σώματος. These two cases should certainly be recorded, but cannot be of decisive importance.

In §16 the writer uses ἀναπτύσσειν for his quotations from the Scriptures. This again is a New Testament word, occurring at Luke 4: 17.

Finally, the word ἐφέλκειν is used in §16; the heretics 'draw down' upon themselves the condemnation expressed in Prov. 18: 3. Ἐφέλκειν is not found in Athanasius' accepted works; nevertheless, a close parallel to this passage appears at *c. Ar.* 3. 1; the same text is quoted, and the heretics again invite their condemnation, the sole difference being the use of the simple verb ἕλκειν; in Ἑνὸς σώματος we read φιλονεικοῦντες εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἐφελκύσαι τὸ γεγραμμένον, in the Oration, φιλονεικοῦαν εἰς ἑαυτοὺς ἑλκύσαι τὸ γεγραμμένον. We began by citing ἐφέλκειν as a probable instance of non-Athanasian vocabulary; what we have discovered is a strong indication of Athanasian authorship.

We have now considered the short list of seven non-Athanasian words out of the first 1,000; some of these cases appear unimportant, and one at least is counter-indicative. The corresponding list from Ἡ φίλαρχος amounts to 36, as we remarked: in §1, φίλαρχος, φιλάργυρος, ὀλατρηλατεῖν, ἀπροσκιρτάν; in §2, κομψεύειν; in §3 the adverb ἔναγχος, repeated in §35, also φιλαρχία, χριστεμπορία and ἀδιάλειπτος. In §4, προοχῆμα, συναγείρειν, ἄρχηθεν. In §5 the contrast markers τοῦτο μὲν . . τοῦτο δὲ, which I think are absent from the Athanasian corpus, but recur here at §59; also περιτροχάζειν and ἁγυιά. In §7 παρεκβαίνειν, συναρπάζειν, repeated in §9, χρηοτολογία, στωμύλος, παραναγινώσκειν, ἀμετανόητος. In §9, βωμόλοχος, φθοροποιός, ἐγκεῖσθαι, εἰσδέχεσθαι, ὑπεκκαίειν. In §10, διανιστάναι. In §11, συναναλαμβάνειν, ἐπιδεκτικός. In §12, προθεωρία. In §14, παράστασις in the sense of 'support', also φρενοβλαβής and ἰδιότροπος, repeated in §32. In 18, φανταστοῦν and οὐσίωσις. In §19, ὁμόστοιχος.

We can, of course, admit that there is a chance factor at work; not all these instances are significant; I will not build much on the presence of ἁγυιά, nor of the verb ἐγκεῖσθαι. But the list as a whole seems to indicate a consciously stylistic writer. He has a liking for doubly compounded verbs: παρεκβαίνειν, παραναγινώσκειν, ὑπεκκαίειν, διανιστάναι, συναναλαμβάνειν, besides συναναίρειν, §11, and ἐμπαροινεῖν, §14, which have some Athanasian currency: seven examples in

our chosen passage against one in Ἑνὸς σώματος, ἐγκαταμῖξαι in §15. Some of his words appear to be drawn from the tradition of anti-heretical rhetoric, for instance οἰστρηλατεῖν, ἀπροσκιρτάν, ἐμπαροινεῖν; χριστεμπορία, says Opitz, is suggested by the Didache. And there is some significance, I think, in his use of the verb περιτροχάζειν, since this can hardly be anything but a deliberate stylistic variant for περιτρέχειν. Περιτρέχειν is extremely common in Athanasius, but Alexander appears to have thought it unacceptably commonplace; in §7 he avoids the participle περιτρέχοντες by writing περιδρομαῖς χρώμενοι.

It is difficult to convey the flavour of a writer by compiling lists of words; and I do not pretend that the contrast in style between Ἑνός σώματος and Ἡ φίλαρχος is absolute; the former writer does in places permit himself some modest decoration. Thus in §3 he writes: ἐν τῇ ἡμετέρᾳ τοίνυν παροικίᾳ ἐξῆλθον νῦν ἄνδρες παράνομοι καὶ χριστομάχοι διδάσκοντες ἀποστασίαν, ἣν εἰκότως ἄν τις πρόδρομον τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου ὑπονοήσειε καὶ καλέσειεν: note the two parallelisms and the correctly used optative construction. The overloaded style of Ἡ φίλαρχος, as I think it, may be illustrated from §7: Ἐπεχείρησαν δὲ περιδρομαῖς χρώμενοι καθ' ἡμῶν παρεκβαίνειν πρὸς τοὺς ὁμόφρονας αὐλλειτουργοὺς, σχήματι μὲν εἰρήνης καὶ ἑνώσεως ἀξίωσιν ὑποκρινόμενοι, τὸ δ' ἀληθὲς συναρπάσαι τινας αὐτῶν εἰς τὴν ἰδίαν νόσον διὰ χρηστολογίας ἀπατῶντες καί στωμυλώτερα γράμματα παρ' αὐτῶν αἰτοῦντες, ἵνα παραναγινώσκοντες αὐτὰ τοῖς ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἠπατημένοις ἀμετανοήτους ἐφ' οἷς ἐσφάλησαν κατασκευάσωσιν, ἐπιτριβομένους εἰς ἀσέβειαν, ὡς ἂν συμψήφους αὐτοῖς καὶ ὁμόφρονας ἔχοντες ἐπισκόπους. There must inevitably be a subjective factor in such judgements of style; but reverting for a moment to calculation, I note that in the sixty words just quoted there are nine having five syllables or more, an impressive proportion of 150 per thousand.

2. I come to my second main point. Again and again we find the phraseology of Ἑνός σώματος echoed in the undisputed works of Athanasius. I must acknowledge my debt to Newman's pioneering observations; but his case can easily be strengthened by using modern aids to study. I begin with the passage just quoted from §3, ἣν εἰκότως ἄν τις πρόδρομον τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου ὑπονοήσειε. Athanasius repeatedly condems Arianism as the forerunner of Antichrist, for instance in *Apol. c. Ar.* 90, τὴν Ἀρειάνην αἵρεσιν χριστομάχον οὖσαν καὶ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου πρόδρομον. Similar texts are found in Oration, 1. 1, 1. 7, *de Synodis*, 5, *Vita Antonii*, 69, and *Historia Arianorum*, 77. Newman goes on to comment on the writer's declaration in §4 that he would willingly have kept silent about the Arians; but the parallels adduced by Newman are not very close, and I think this sentence is a mere literary commonplace. Ancient authors habitually introduce their

books by explaining that there should be no need for them. It is quite otherwise with the *reason* the author gives here for keeping silent, §4, ὅπως μὴ ῥυπώσῃ τινῶν ἀκεραίων τὰς ἀκοάς, compare §12, anyone who hears of it stops his ears, τὰς ἀκοὰς βύει ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ τὸν ῥύπιον τούτων τῶν ῥημάτων ψαύσαι τῆς ἀκοῆς. Athanasius often uses ῥύπος and related words to indicate the filth of heresy, and a specific reference to words which one should not hear is found in Oration, 3. 28, ἀπόθεσθε τὴν Ἀρείου μανίαν, τήν τε ἀκοὴν ὑμῶν τὴν ῥυπωθεῖσαν ἀπὸ τῶν βλαοφήμων ῥημάτων ἀπονίψασθε. Again, he often expresses concern for the ἀκέραιοι, especially by accusing the heretics of deceiving them, for example, Oration, 2. 34, ἵνα τὰς ἀκοὰς ταράσσωσι τῶν ἀκεραιοτέρων.

After the remark about Eusebius' envious glances at Nicomedia the author mentions his letters of commendation, devised ὅπως ὑποσύρῃ τινὰς ἀγνοοῦντας εἰς τὴν αἰσχίστην ταύτην καί χριστομάχον αἵρεσιν; compare Athanasius' Letter to the Bishops of Egypt §4, ὁ ἁπλοῦς ὑποσύρεται ταῖς ἐκείνων μεθοδείαις.

In §5 we hear of the Arians' δύατηνα ῥηματα. This has a close parallel in Oration, 1. 4, where Athanasius makes Arius express his δύστηνα ῥημάτια 'in dissolute and gangling metres'. It may be, indeed, that the agreement is exact, since Opitz's text reads ῥημάτια at §16, as against ῥήματα in §§5 and 12; and for what it is worth, Socrates' transcript of the letter has ῥημάτια at §5. The word occurs elsewhere in Athanasius; see, for instance, a rather unusually ornate passage in *Decr.* 18. 5, τὰ μὲν οὖν προειρημένα τῶν χριστομάχων χαμαίζηλα ῥημάτια προαπέδειξεν ὁ λόγος; Athanasius, as I remarked, can vary his style and is not always content with unadorned simplicity.

Consideration of §§7–10 may be postponed until we come to examine the writer's treatment of Arian doctrine. Resuming at §11, we note that Eusebius' companions are described as σπουδάζοντες ἐγκαταμῖξαι τὸ ψεῦδος τῇ ἀληθείᾳ; compare *Hist. Ar.* 41, θελήσαντες ἐγκαταμῖξαι τὴν ἀαέβειαν. In the same §11 comes the jibe about the agreement of Christ with Belial, one of the few genuine parallels between Ἑνὸς αὐματος and Ἡ φίλαρχος. It seems, however, to be a commonplace; it is used by Origen and occurs in the *Serdicense*, while the companion clause about light and darkness appears in *Vit. Ant.* 69 and Festal Letter, 7. 4.

In §16, after saying that the heretics invite the condemnation of Prov. 18: 3, the writer pleasingly compares the Arian party with chamaeleons. This figure appears again in *Decr.* 1 and *Hist. Ar.* 79, and is perfectly typical of Athanasius; he likes to compare his opponents with various kinds of wild beasts and reptiles, as Newman observed.[10]

[10] Robertson, op. cit., p. 371 n. 8.

Parallels can also be found for Eusebius' κακόνοια, §5; for σπουδάζειν used of Arian manœuvres in §11, and for παρακρούειν, of their perverse exegesis, in §15.

If the parallels I have given are not already convincing, let me add that a valid proof can only be based on comparative data. There are, of course, parallels also between Ἡ φίλαρχος and the authentic Athanasius; but these are mostly substantial points of theology, where one might expect Alexander's deacon to follow his master. Examples are the absurdity of saying that God's Wisdom was once non-existent (§27); the dictum that he is Son by nature, φύσει, and not by convention, θέσει (§29); the contention that the Son cannot progress or be improved (§§30–4). But the parallelism between Ἑνὸς σώματος and Athanasius extends to unimportant details of vocabulary and characteristic turns of phrase, which are far better proofs of identity of authorship. Even when Alexander makes theological points which Athanasius will follow, there is frequently a contrast between an ornate and a simple style. Thus the point about God's eternal Wisdom is made in Ἑνὸς σώματος §13 in a characteristically terse Athanasian phrase: If the Son is God's Wisdom, how absurd to say ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν· ἴσον γὰρ ἐστιν αὐτοὺς λέγειν ἄλογον καί ἄσοφόν ποτε τὸν θεὸν. Alexander is cumbersome by comparison.

3. Having now considered the evidence of style and vocabulary, I wish to compare the two letters in their treatment of the Arian opposition. I shall point first to a contrast of form, in the way they present and organize their material. Next I shall argue for a difference in content, involving their use and disuse of Arius' *Thalia*. We shall then consider the relative dating of the two letters; the accepted order, I claim, presents a dilemma which can only be resolved by assigning Ἑνὸς σώματος to Athanasius.

3. 1. This letter presents a concise summary of Arian doctrine within a compass of 226 words. Rudolf Lorenz has taken it as his standard for comparative purposes, and divides its contents into eight headings. This division, I think, is not perfectly satisfactory, for the headings vary a good deal in complexity and importance. I would be inclined to treat heading I as a mere preface to II, and VII as an appendix to VI; but Lorenz's scheme is well known, and is quite serviceable for our purpose. Lorenz adds a ninth heading, rather confusingly, for which he quotes no evidence from Ἑνὸς σώματος. This deals with the inequality of the Arian Trinity, for which the main text is Oration, 1. 6, with partial parallels in *Syn.* 15; but there is similar matter in Ἑνὸς σώματος under headings II and V, which present the view that the Son is unlike the Father in essence, and is strange and alien and divided from it; the words ξένος καὶ ἀλλότριος τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς οὐσίας are closely paralleled in the Oration.

Let us now compare this summary of Arian doctrine, §§7–10, with the rather longer polemical reply which follows in §§11–15. I find that the summary and the reply do not deal with the same topics in exactly the same order, as if the writer had made notes of his criticisms and ticked them off one by one. On the other hand, almost every point mentioned in the summary is taken up somewhere in the reply. This suggests a clear-minded author who knows exactly what he wants to say, and can dispense with mechanical methods.

The facts can best be shown by a table, but we may review them in brief. Lorenz's heading I picks out the Arian claim that God was not always Father. This is not taken up in the reply, though it was clearly important for Athanasius, who repeats this complaint in four other summaries of Arianism (see Lorenz, pp. 38–9). But this first heading serves to introduce the much more striking and complex heading II, in which occur the controversial phrases ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων and ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν. My own analysis breaks this heading down into six sub-sections, all of which receive some form of answer; in some cases quite direct, like the answer to ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν and to ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων in §12, sometimes rather allusive, like the answer to ὁ γὰρ ὢν θεὸς τὸν μὴ ὄντα πεποίηκε, where πεποίηκε is countered by citing Ps. 44: 2 and 109: 3 (ἐξερεύξατο, ἐγέννησά σε). Heading III criticizes the Arian doctrine of a secondary Wisdom; not all its points are directly answered; but, for instance, the οὔτε ἀληθινὸς . . λόγος καὶ . . σοφία, ἀλλ' εἷς τῶν ποιημάτων of §7 is met by the assumption in §13, εἰ λόγος καὶ σοφία ἐστι τοῦ θεοῦ, and the direct denial of εἷς τῶν ποιημάτων in §12. The only real omission is the supposedly Arian point that the Son is improperly called Logos and Wisdom. Heading IV, claiming that the Arians made the Son changeable, τρεπτός, is directly answered in §14. Heading V, stating that he is ξένος καὶ ἀλλότριος, etc., gets a partial reply in §13: πῶς ἀνόμοιος τῇ οὐσίᾳ τοῦ πατρός; Heading VI, that the Son does not perfectly know the Father, nor see him, receives an extended reply in §15, though the detail that the Son does not *see* the Father is omitted; and the point distinguished by Lorenz as VII, namely that the Son does not know his own essence, is also lacking. Finally, the claim set out under VIII, that He was made on our account, receives a direct reply: δι' ἡμᾶς γέγονε is answered by quoting Hebr. 2: 10, δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα καὶ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα. To sum up this discussion, Headings II, IV, V, and VIII receive full answers; III and VI are answered in part; the only headings completely passed over are I and VII, which we have noted are brief subsidiary points made in connection with II and VI. Note further that the 'answers' are all contained in the short passage §§12–15; in §§16–20 the writer turns to more general criticisms and the request to refuse communion.

Let us now examine the corresponding matetial in Ἡ φίλαρχος. As we observed, this letter has a more complex structure; there is a summary of Arian teaching in §§10–14, comprising 270 words, roughly equal to the 226 of Ἑνὸς σώματος, followed by a polemical reply in §§15–25. This, however, leads on to a positive statement of anti-Arian theology, §§26–34, with some further theological remarks in §§37–40 and §§46–54.

How does the initial summary compare with that given in Ἑνὸς σώματος? We noted that the latter records eight distinct points, by Lorenz's reckoning; the corresponding passages in Ἡ φίλαρχος notes only four; Lorenz's II, on the non-eternity of the Logos, is adequately treated; his IV, on changeability, is so much expanded that it occupies more than half the total space; there is a rather slight reminiscence of V, the Son's unlikeness to the Father, in §13: οὔτε φύσει υἱὰς, οὔτε τινὰ ἔχων ἰδιότητα πρὸς αὐτόν. Finally, a quite new point is made; the Son is not merely said to be one of the creatures, but is equated with 'every man', §10, with all God's other sons, §13, and with Paul and Peter,

TABLE I

Arianisms and replies in Ἑνὸς σώματος

§7 L I	Οὐκ ἀεὶ ὁ θεὸς πατὴρ ἦν	———
	ὁλλ' ἦν ὁτε ὁ θεός πατὴρ οὐκ ἦν	(cf. §13, πῶς ἄλογον ποτε τὸν θεόν;)
L II	οὐκ ἀεὶ ἦν ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος	(cf. on ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν below)
	ἀλλ' ἐξ οὐκ ὀντων γέγονεν	§9: πῶς δὲ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, etc
	ὁ γὰρ ὢν θεὸς τὸν μὴ ὀντα	
	ἐκ τοῦ μὴ ὀντος πεποίηκε	cf §9 above.
	διὸ καὶ ἦν ὁτε οὐκ ἦν	§12: τίς ἀκούων [Jo. 1: 1] οὐ καταγινώσκει
	κτίαμα γάρ ἐστι καὶ ποίημα ὁ υἱός	(§12 condemns εἷς ἐστι τῶν ποιημάτων)
	οὔτε δὲ ὁμοιος κατ' οὐσίαν τῷ πατρί ἐστιν	§13: ἢ πῶς ἀνόμοιος τῇ οὐσίᾳ τοῦ πατρὸς etc
L III	οὔτε ἀληθινός καὶ φύσει λόγος ἐστὶν	cf. §13: εἰ λόγος
	οὔτε ἀληθινὴ οοφία αὐτοῦ ἐστιν	καὶ αοφία ἐατὶ τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ υἱός
	ὰλλ' εἷς τῶν ποιημότων καὶ γενητῶν ἐστι,	§12 condemns εἷς ἐστι τῶν ποιημάτων
	καταχρηστικῶς δὲ λέγεται λόγος καὶ οοφία	———
	γενόμενος καὶ αὐτὸς τῷ ἰδίῳ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ	cf. §12 δι αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο πάντα
	καὶ τῇ ἐν τῷ θεῷ οοφίᾳ	and §14 ὁτ' οὗ τὸ πάντα
	ἐν ᾗ καὶ τό πόντα καὶ αὐτόν πεποίηκεν ὁ θεός	
§8 L IV	διό καὶ τρεπτός ἐατι καὶ ἀλλοίωτος τὴν φύσιν	§14 πῶς ὁὲ τρεπτός καί ἀλλοίωτος
	ὡς καὶ πάντα τὰ λογικά [cf also §10]	(cf §14: καὶ γενόμενος ἄνθρωπος οὐκ ἠλλοίωται)
L V	ξένος τε καὶ ὁλλότριος καὶ ἀπεοχοινισμένος ἐατιν	
	ὁ λόγος τῆς τοῦ θεοῦ οὐοίας	§13 ἢ πῶς ἀνόμοιος τῇ οὐσίᾳ τοῦ πατρός etc
L VI	καὶ ἀόρατός ἐστιν ὁ πατὴρ τῷ υἱῷ	———
	οὔτε γὰρ τελείως καὶ ἀκριβῶς γινώσκει	§15 condemns οὐκ οἶδεν τελείως
	ὁ λόγος τόν πατέρα,	ὁ λόγος τὸν πατέρα
	οὐτε τελείως ὁρᾶν αὐτὸν ὁῦναται	———
L VII	κοὶ γὰρ καὶ ἑαυτοῦ τὴν οὐοίαν	
	οὐκ οἶδεν ὁ υἱός ὡς ἔστι	
§9 L VIII	δι' ἡμὰς γὰρ πεποίηται.	§14 condemns δι' ἡμᾶς γέγονε
	ἵνα ἡμὰς δι' αὐτοῦ	
	ὡς δι' ὀργάνου κτίσῃ ὁ θεός	———
§10	καὶ οὐκ ἂν ὑπέστη	
	εἰ μὴ ἡμάς ὁ θεός ἠθέληοε ποιῆααι	———
	ἠρώτηοε γοῦν τραπῆναι etc	cf §14 cited against §8 above.

§14. There is no mention at all of Lorenz's points I, III, VI, VII, or VIII.

To expand these comments a little. Alexander complains that the Arians say ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ γέγονεν ὕστερον ὁ πρότερον μὴ ὑπάρχων, §10, which he follows immediately by the new point equating the Son with every man. The next section, §11, briefly resumes Lorenz's heading II, asserting that the Arians consider the Son as made ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, the word ἐποίησε providing a link with the term ποίημα found in Ἑνὸς σώματος. But in §11, in the third sentence of his summary, Alexander turns to the Arian claim, as he believes, that the Son is τρεπτῆς φύσεως. There follows a full and most interesting discussion of this point, to which I shall return; but this point, Lorenz's no IV, and the new point about ordinary manhood, occupy the whole remainder of the summary.

Moreover, having selected these few points for emphasis, Alexander is by no means disposed to think that he has said enough. The phrase ἦν ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, attacked in the refutation, §§15 and 23, is again condemned in §27, and indirectly again by the references to the Son's eternal existence in §§48 and 51. The phrase ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, condemned in the refutation, §§15, 16, 18, and 22, is noticed again in 26, indirectly in 36, and directly again at 44, 45 and 46. Lorenz's point IV, that the Son must be ἄτρεπτος, first appearing in §§11–14, is resumed in 29, 30, 34, and 47. The Arians' views of the Logos are presented in various guises; they make him τοῖς πάσιν ἴσον, §4; a mere man, §§10, 14; they revive the errors of Judaism, §4, of Paul of Samosata, §35. Their reasoning is variously explained; they select humanizing texts from the Bible, §§4, 37; they make the Son changeable, like every man, §10. But his changeability is both deduced from his non-eternity, §10, and presented as actually taught by the Arians, §§10–14. I am inclined to think that the reference to Paul of Samosata is a mere artifice of controversy. The *Thalia* extracts show that Arius regarded the Logos, perhaps as a kind of creature, but also as a kind of god, ἰσχυρὸς θεός, and certainly not as a mere man; but possibly the Paulianist views complained of are really those of the Syrian bishops mentioned in §37. To resume the catalogue of repetitions, the claim that Christ's goodness is achieved through προκοπή, censured in §§13–14, is revisited in §§30, 34, and 46. Finally, Lorenz's point V, the Arian Son's unlikeness to the Father, initially sketched in §13, is repeatedly rehandled; §§28, 29, 31, 32, 34, and 37 all take up this point in slightly varying terms.

I apologize for this tedious catalogue of details, but I think it shows that Alexander's method—or lack of method—in treating the same points again and again without any overall controlling design contrasts very strongly with the orderly procedure followed in Ἑνὸς σώματος. I

will add one other point to the same effect. Alexander's summary of Arian doctrine, §§10–14, and indeed his initial reply in §§15–25, simply omits objectionable points of Arian doctrine which he nevertheless knows and which attract incidental notice later on. Thus he does not include Lorenz's point I, that God was not always Father. But in §26 he suddenly switches from condemning the ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων to state ἀνάγκη τὸν πατέρα ἀεὶ εἶναι πατέρα. And point VI, that the Son has no knowledge of the Father, ignored at first, is taken up in §§46–7; after saying that rational creatures, τὰ λογικά, cannot comprehend the Father's nature, he quotes Matt. 11:27, οὐδεὶς οἶδε τίς ἐστιν ὁ πατήρ, εἰ μὴ ὁ υἱός. In other words, Alexander knows much more about Arianism than he reveals in the summary; he simply fails to ptesent what he knows in the effective and logical place. Once again, there is a remarkable contrast with the lucid and orderly procedure of the Ἑνὸς σώματος.

3.2. It remains to consider the two letters in relation to Arius' *Thalia*. I wish to make the rather precise claim that the material presented in Ἑνὸς σώματος is deducible, with few exceptions, from the extracts preserved in *Syn.* 15.[11] I suppose that this set of extracts was assembled immediately after the Thalia was written, and was filed away, to be published some forty years later along with Arius' Letter to Alexander, Opitz's Urkunde, 6. But if this rather far-teaching claim is not acceptable, the material I present still serves to show that Ἑνὸς σώματος is closely related to the *Thalia*, whereas Ἡ φίλαρχος is not.

Lorenz begins with the thesis that God was not always Father. This can be deduced from Thalia l. 21:[12] αὐτίκα γοῦν υἱοῦ μὴ ὄντος ὁ πατὴρ θεός ἐστι. Arius may have meant only that the Father was in existence before the Son; but the verse could easily be interpreted: 'When the Son did not exist, the Father was God', that is God *simpliciter* and not Father. Athanasius repeatedly claims that the very name 'Father' implies the existence of a son; without a Son God would not be Father.[13] (How convincing this argument was to the ancients, we moderns may observe with a smile, and how utterly remote from them was the reflection that to become a father, all one actually needs is a daughter!)

Lorenz's heading II is complex, as already noted. It begins: οὐκ ἀεὶ ἦν ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος. Arius expresses this quite clearly in Thalia 20–2; besides the verse already quoted, see l. 20, ἡ δυάς δ' οὐκ ἦν πρὶν ὑπάρξῃ, and 22, λοιπὸν ὁ υἱὸς οὐκ ὢν ὕπηρξε. The next clause in the

[11] See *JTS* xxix (1978), 20–38 for the claim that these conform fairly closely to Arius' text.

[12] I cite Bardy's lines for brevity. Line 1=Opitz 242. 9; line 20=243. 1. So add 8 or subtract 19 to obtain Opitz's reference.

[13] *Or. c. Ar.* 1. 33 *al. passim*

TABLE II

Ενὸς σώματος and the Thalia (Syn. 15)

L I	οὐκ ἀεὶ ὁ θεὸς ποτὲ ἦν	21 αὐτίκα γοῦν υἱοῦ μὴ ὄντος ὁ πατὴρ θεὸς ἐστι
L II	οὐκ ἀεὶ ἦν ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγος	4 . . διὰ τὸν ἀρχὴν ἔχοντα
		20 ἡ δυὰς δ' οὐκ ἦν πρὶν ὑπάρξῃ
		22 ὁ υἱὸς οὐκ ὢν (ὑπῆρξε δὲ θελήσει πατρώᾳ)
		[31. 38 are similar]
	ἀλλ ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων γέγονεν	but cf. 39 τὸν ἐκ πατρὸς ὄντα: but NB also Opitz Urk. 1 § 5
	ὁ γὰρ ὢν θεὸς πεποίηκε	ποιεῖν *deest*, but cf. 7, τεκνοποιήσας. also ὑπῆρξε. ὑπέστη passim
	διὸ καὶ ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν	22 οὐκ ὢν ὑπῆρξε, also υἱοῦ μὴ ὄντος (above).
	κτίσμα γὰρ ἐστι καὶ ποίημα ὁ υἱός	κτίσμα. κτίζειν *desunt*: cf. on πεποίηκε above
L III	οὔτε δὲ ὅμοιος κατ' οὐσίαν τῷ ποτρί ἐστιν	2, 8, and esp. 9 ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ὁμοούσιος αὐτῷ
	οὔτε ἀληθινὸς καὶ φύσει λόγος ἐστιν	25–6 ἐπινοεῖται σοφία λόγος; elsewhere υἱός is used
	οὔτε ἀληθινὴ σοφία αὐτοῦ ἐστιν	10 σοφὸς δέ ἐστιν ὁ θεὸς etc
		24 σοφία ὑπῆρξε σοφοῦ θεοῦ θελήσει
	ἀλλ εἷς τῶν ποιημάτων	[see on πεποίηκε above]
	καὶ γενητῶν ἐστι	6 ἀρχὴν . . τῶν γενητῶν
	καταχρηστικῶς δὲ λέγεται λόγος καὶ σοφία	25 ἐπινοεῖται γοῦν . . σοφία καὶ λόγος
	γενόμενος καὶ αὐτὸς	cf. 5 (?) τὸν ἐν χρόνοις γεγαδτα
	τῷ ἰδίῳ τοῦ θεοῦ λόγῳ/σοφίᾳ	see above, 25–6, 10, 24
	ἐν ᾗ καὶ τὰ πάντα καὶ αὐτὸν πεποίηκεν ὁ θ	12 τοῖς τε δι' υἱοῦ καὶ αὐτῷ τῷ υἱῷ
L IV	διὸ καὶ τρεπτός ἐστι etc	cf. 10 (?) τῆς σοφίας διδάσκαλος
L V	ξένος τε καὶ ἀλλότριος	19 ξένος 23 ἀλλότριος
L VI	καὶ ἀόρατός ἐστιν ὁ πατὴρ τῷ υἱῷ	11–15, esp. 12, τῷ υἱῷ ἀόρατος
	οὔτε γὰρ τελείως καὶ ἀκριβῶς γινώσκει	cf. 40 οὐτὸν τὸν γεννήσαντα γνῶναι ἐν καταλήψει
	οὔτε τελείως ὁρᾶν αὐτόν δύναται	11–15 esp. 14 f. ἰδίοιαί τε μέτροις . . ἰδεῖν
L VII	καὶ γὰρ καὶ ἑαυτοῦ τὴν οὐσίαν οὐκ οἶδεν	37 αὐτὸς γὰρ ὁ υἱὸς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ οὐσίαν οὐκ οἶδεν
	ὁ υἱὸς ὡς ἔστι	
L VIII	δι' ἡμᾶς γὰρ πεποίηται	6 ἀρχὴν τὸν υἱὸν ἔθηκε τῶν γενητῶν
	ἵνα ἡμᾶς δι' αὐτοῦ κτίσῃ ὁ θεός	
	καὶ οὐκ ἂν ὑπέστη	
	εἰ μὴ ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἠθέλησε ποιῆσαι	

letter, ἀλλ' ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων γέγονεν, has no clear parallel in the *Thalia* extracts, and I think was not an essential Arian tenet; Arius presents it as a deduction in his Letter to Eusebius, *Urk.* 1 §5, and tacitly retracts it later by allowing the phrase ἐκ πατρὸς (*Thalia* 39) or ἐκ τοῦ πατρός.[14] The third clause, ὁ γὰρ ὢν θεὸς τὸν μὴ ὄντα . . πεποίηκε, raises the question whether Arius really did say that the Father 'made' the Son, as Athanasius often affirms. There is no primary evidence for this; the *Thalia* says that the Father begot him (τεκνοποιεῖν, l. 7, γεννᾶν, ll. 28 and 40), but also uses the non-committal terms ὑπῆρξεν and ὑπέστη. Critics of Arius commonly say that he gave the term 'begetting' a purely nominal, indeed a nugatory sense; and, of course, he does couple γεννᾶν with κτίζειν, ὁρίζειν and θεμελιοῦν in his Letter to Eusebius. I think he probably did use the word ποιεῖν, in view of Heb.

[14] Opitz Urk. 30 §2 (ἐξ αὐτοῦ); cf. ibid., 13, 14, §§45–8, Ath. *Decr.* 19

3: 2 and the precedent set by Dionysius of Alexandria;[15] but, of course, without sharply opposing ποιεῖν to γεννᾶν, as Athanasius did. The orthodox view, if I understand it right, is (*a*) that the Son's generation is totally mysterious, but (*b*) it is obviously not the same as creation. I myself can excuse Arius for being a little less dogmatic.

The next sentence, διὸ καὶ ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, is easily deducible from verses already cited; then follows κτίσμα γάρ ἐστι καὶ ποίημα. The noun κτίσμα figures in Arius' Letter to Alexander with the well-known qualification ἀλλ' οὐχ ὡς ἓν τῶν κτισμάτων; it is coupled with γέννημα, similarly qualified, not with ποίημα. Athanasius as we know dismisses the qualifications as valueless;[16] but he is hardly justified in claiming that Arius called the Logos εἷς τῶν ποιημάτων, since *Thalia* ll. 28–9 affirm his exceptional dignity—not even God can generate anything *better*, only something equally good. On the other hand, the next complaint, οὔτε δὲ ὅμοιος κατ' οὐσίαν, etc., is clearly consonant with *Thalia*, ll. 2, 8–9, and 19, which include οὐδὲ ὅμοιον, οὐδὲ ὁμοούσιος, and ξένος κατ' οὐσίαν.

We next hear (Lorenz, III) that the Arian Logos is not the genuine Logos or Wisdom, but is improperly so called. This may well be based on *Thalia*, l. 25, ἐπινοεῖται γοῦν μυρίαις ὅσαις ἐπινοίαις, πνεῦμα, δύναμις, σοφία: ignoring the honorific effect of this series of titles, Athanasius concentrates his fire on the single word ἐπινοεῖται, which he repeatedly takes to signify a baseless fancy, an interpretation which was later taken up by Eunomius and was quite properly condemned by Basil.[17] Possibly the very various ways in which Athanasius expresses the Arian point reveal that he is not dealing with an obviously objectionable catch-word like ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν. But the next comment, γενόμενος καὶ αὐτός etc., is perfectly fair. Arius undoubtedly did acknowledge two Wisdoms, his Logos being the expression of God's inherent Wisdom; see *Thalia* l. 24, ἡ σοφία σοφία ὑπῆρξε ἀόφου θεοῦ θελήσει; though probably without underlining the point by writing the second σοφία as a dative, as in *Oration*, 1.5. He clearly taught, like Asterius, that the Son was the Father's agent in creation (see *Thalia*, l. 6. ἀρχὴν τὸν υἱὸν ἔθηκε τῶν γενητῶν ὁ ἄναρχος). His critic suppresses this point, and substitutes the charge that it was by his own 'real' Wisdom that God made both the Son and everything else: ἐν ᾗ καὶ τὰ πάντα καὶ αὐτὸν πεποίηκεν ὁ θεός.

Lorenz's Heading IV introduces the words διό καὶ τρεπτός ἐστι καὶ ἀλλοίωτος. This is a notorious difficulty which I have discussed

[15] See W. A. Bienert, *Dion. v. Alex.* (1978), p. 64; D. de Bruyne, ZNW, xxvii (1928), 106–10.

[16] *Or. c. Ar.* 2. 19.

[17] Eunomius *Apologia* 8; Basil *c. Eun.* 1. 6–7; see T. A. Kopecek, *A History of Neo-Arianism* 2. 375–8, and refs.

elsewhere.[18] The *Thalia* selections do not say that the Son is changeable, and Arius' letters, *Urk.* 1 and 6, affirm exactly the opposite. It may perhaps be significant that in this one instance where the *Thalia* provides no target, its critic supports his case by an alleged conversation with Arians, not necessarily involving Arius himself; this theme is, of course, developed at much greater length in Ἡ φίλαρχος.

Heading V is merely an emphatic restatement of points made in II, but is supported by the claim under Heading VI, that the Son does not know the Father τελείως καὶ ἀκριβῶς, nor see him τελείως. This resembles *Thalia*, 11–15 and 39–40. Despite his promise of an explanation, Arius apparently does not make it clear whether the Son can see the Father. The phrase τῷ υἱῷ ἀόρατος ὁ αὐτός, l. 12, suggests he does not, perhaps because the Father is in his very nature invisible; but Arius also claims that the Son enjoys a limited vision, ll. 14–15, ἰδίοιοί τε μέτροις ὑπομένει ὁ υἱὸς ἰδεῖν τὸν πατέρα, ὡς θέμις ἐστίν. The word ὑπομένει, could well suggest that the Father's glory is too dazzling to be easily borne, cf. Eusebius, *DE* 4. 6. 2. Arius does say, however, that the Son cannot clearly comprehend his own Father, αὐτὸν τὸν γεννήσαντα γνῶναι ἐν καταλήψει, l. 40. Here possibly compare ll. 32–6: the Son cannot expound the Father's attributes comprehendingly, κατὰ κατάληψιν, but he does address him discreetly in hymns. The appended point, that the Son does not know his own οὐσία, comes almost word-for-word from *Thalia*, l. 37.

Lorenz's Heading VIII raises a curious problem with whose discussion I must conclude. Our text runs (§9): δι' ἡμᾶς γὰρ πεποίηται, ἵνα ἡμᾶς δι' αὐτοῦ ὡς δι' ὀργάνου κτίσῃ ὁ θεός καί οὐκ ἂν ὑπέστη, εἰ μὴ ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς ἠθέλησε ποιῆσαι. Arius, as we observed, certainly held that the Son was the Father's agent in creation; the *Thalia* calls him ἀρχὴν τῶν γενητῶν. But our letter makes an ingenious use of the fact that that Arius immediately follows this verse 6 by saying that the Father constituted him Son, τόνδε τεκνοποιήσας, which I believe implies begetting, not adoption.[19] The writer thus argues, *post hoc, propter hoc*: and by charging Arius with the view that the Son was begotten simply for the purpose of creation, he is able to imply, by good Aristotelian logic,[20] that the Son, being a mere means, is less valuable than the creation for which he was begotten.

Did Arius in fact hold that the Son was begotten for the purpose of

[18] 'The Freedom of the Will and the Arian Controversy', *Platonismus und Christentum* (Fs. H. Dörrie, ed. H.-D. Blume and F. Mann), pp. 245–57, repr. in my *Substance and Illusion* (1985), XVI.

[19] 'Begetting' is understood by R. D. Williams and S. G. Hall; see R. C. Gregg (ed.), *Arianism (Patr. Monogr.* 11 (1985)), pp. 9 n. 43 and 49 n. 16; 'adoption' by R. C. Gregg and D. E. Groh, *Early Arianism*, (1981), pp. 23, 56, 96; R. Lorenz, *Arius Judaizans?*, pp. 77–8, 123.

[20] *Nic. Eth.* 1. 1, 1094a 5–6.

creation? We have no evidence from the primary texts; but I think it is not unlikely. The view was widely held in early Christian teaching, for instance by Tertullian, and was maintained in the fourth century by Marcellus and by Constantine.[21] The writer intends to be seen as attacking a view peculiar to Arius; but this is a deception.

But the argument against it, whether justified or not, involves the admission that the Son played an active part in the creation. It manifestly conflicts with the charge which is made elsewhere, that Arius regarded the Son merely as εἷς τῶν ποιημάτων. But Athanasius, if he it is, no doubt assumed that provided he did not too closely juxtapose the two charges, the discrepancy would not be noticed. If, so, he was perfectly right; some hundreds of orthodox critics have reproduced his attacks upon Arius without observing the contradiction.

But to convince anyone who actually knew the *Thalia*, the writer must not overstate his depreciation of the Arian Logos; Arius had after all described him as ἰσχυρὸς θεός, a powerful phrase based on Isa. 9: 5, and as begotten before creation. His opponent, therefore, is not too specific. The Arian Logos, he says, is εἷς τῶν ποιημάτων and is comparable with πάντα τὰ λογικά (§8). He does *not* say that the Arians treated Christ as a mere man. There is admittedly some contrast here with the best-known works of Athanasius, but I think this can be explained. His confidence no doubt growing with the repetition of a familiar theme, Athanasius was able to charge the Arians both with reducing the Logos to the level of humanity and with making him the means by which humanity was made.[22] And, of course, for all we can actually *prove*, some Arians may have been sufficiently confused to accept both these ideas in conjunction; though I hardly believe this of Arius himself. At all events, Athanasius does not tax him with the contradiction.

3. 3. I have tried to show that the anti-Arian polemic of Ἑνὸς σώματος is closely based on the *Thalia*, precisely as excerpted in the *de Synodis*. The method of Ἡ φίλαρχος is completely different. Alexander does not base his accusations on Arius' writings; he depends rather on Arian utterances, heard or reported. He complains that the Arians misuse the scriptural texts attesting our Lord's humanity. He ignores the whole notion of an assistant creator and presses the charge that the Arians treated Christ as a mere man.

This general character of Ἡ φίλαρχος was noted by Bardy in 1926, and distinguished from that of Ἑνὸς σώματος, which he saw was based

[21] Marcellus, see Eusebius, *ET* 3. 3. 43. Constantine, Opitz Urk. 27 §3 is similar, despite the disclaimer in §1.

[22] (*a*) e.g. *c. Ar.* 1. 38 (ὅλον ἄνθρωπον εἶναι φύσει), 3. 54, 55 (ἄνθρωπον αὐτὸν ὅλον ἐκ γῆς (*b*) *c. Ar.* 1. 5, *Ep. Aeg.* 12.

on the *Thalia*; though he did not relate it, as I have done, precisely to the *de Synodis* extracts. Bardy of course assumed that Ἐνὸς σώματος was written by Alexander, and sought to explain its contrasting character in terms of chronology, suggesting that Ἡ φίλαρχος was written first, before Alexander had any knowledge of the *Thalia*. But this dating is impossible; Opitz is clearly right in arguing that Ἡ φίλαρχος was written later,[23] the clinching argument, surely, being the reference to Colluthus, who appears as one of the signatories to the deposition of Arius (§21) but is described in Ἡ φίλαρχος as having previously condemned the Arians, but only as a pretext for his own evil purpose, and having subsequently given them an example of χριοτεμπορία and disobedience to the Church.

This and other puzzles are fully resolved if we acknowledge Athanasius as the real author of Ἐνὸς σώματος. No other writer agrees so exactly with its style, its vocabulary, its view of Arianism, and the controversial tactics which it employs.

I gave this paper the title 'Athanasius' Earliest Written Work'. But perhaps a brief postscript is called for; should I have added a note of interrogation? We all know that there is a strong case for dating the *Contra Gentes* and the *De Incarnatione* to the 330s; but I think I have shown that Athanasius was charged with an important task by his diocesan at the age of little more than 20 years, and fulfilled it with distinction. In this light it is clearly possible that he should have written the works I have mentioned a year or two earlier. The case is not closed; but any doubts on the score of youth and inexperience must be banished for ever.

[23] 'Die Zeitfolge des arianischen Streites', *ZNW* xxxiii (1934), 149. This chronology has now been challenged by Rowan Williams (*Arius Heresy and Tradition*, pp. 48–60) But I do not find it easy to believe that Ἐνὸς σώματος was written as late as the beginning of 325 There would surely be some allusion to Constantine's Letter, Opitz *Urkunde* 17, which is assigned to October 324

XI

Athanasius als Exeget

Im technischen Sinn kommt Athanasius als Exeget kaum in Betracht. Er hat kein einziges Buch, ja sogar kein einziges Kapitel der heiligen Schrift fortlaufend kommentiert. Als Schriftausleger von Fall zu Fall ist er jedoch außerordentlich einflußreich gewesen; seine ausgezeichnete Kenntnis der Bibel wird immer wieder gelobt, und die Prinzipien der Exegese, die er formuliert hat, haben weitverbreiteten Beifall gefunden.

Zur Bekräftigung des ersten Punktes: Wir gestehen zwar zu, daß einige exegetische Traktate als Schriften des Athanasius gezählt worden sind; hauptsächlich die *Expositiones in Psalmos*, Migne 27, 55-590. Dieser Text ist aber, wie bekannt, auf unglückliche Art interpoliert; zwar hat der italienische Gelehrte Giovanni Maria Vian in einer wichtigen Untersuchung die Möglichkeit geboten, einen verbesserten Text wiederherzustellen (das Büchlein erschien 1978).[1] Fast gleichzeitig stellte sich aber heraus, daß selbst der gereinigte Text keineswegs als Werk des Athanasius gelten kann. Erstens hat es den Anschein, daß der Kommentar, wenigstens bei den Psalmen 39 bis 41, Ausschnitte aus Didymus und sogar aus Kyrill einschließt und deshalb nicht früher als 440 datiert werden sollte; so Dorival und Rondeau. Zweitens suchte ich selbst zu zeigen, daß die hier überlieferte Psalmenexegese zu der zweifellos echten *Epistula ad Marcellinum* mehrmals im Widerspruch steht; im ganzen muß das Werk deswegen als unecht betrachtet werden.[2] Zwar hat Vian in einem demnächst erscheinenden Aufsatz, den er mir freundlich mitgeteilt hat, solche Bedenken zu entkräften versucht;[3] meine eigenen Einwände sind jedoch nicht widerlegt worden.

1 G. M. Vian, *Testi Inediti dal Commento ai Salmi di Atanasio*, SEA 14, Rom 1978.

2 G. C. Stead, *St. Athanasius on the Psalms*, in: VChr 39, 1985, 65-78.

3 G. M. Vian, *Il 'De Psalmorum Titulis'; L'Esegesi di Atanasio tra Eusebio e Cirillo*, in: Orpheus 12, 1991, 3-42.

Die anderen exegetischen Fragmente lassen wir vorläufig außer acht. Welche Belege bleiben uns dann noch zur Verfügung?

Zuerst erwähnt sei die genannte *Epistula ad Marcellinum in Interpretationem Psalmorum*, PG 27, 12-45. Sie enthält zwar keine fortlaufende Auslegung, obgleich sämtliche Verse zitiert und kommentiert werden. Viel wichtiger ist die Erklärung der Absicht und Nützlichkeit des Psalmenbuches als ganzen, sowie die Belehrung für die Anwendung einzelner Psalmen zur Andacht, als Erbauungsmittel oder auch zum Trost bei Gefahr oder Verfolgung.

Daneben gibt es noch einige kurze Traktate über einzelne Texte, die sich als rätselhaft oder umstritten erwiesen; zum Beispiel *In Illud Omnia*, eine Auslegung von Lukas 10, 22, sowie die letzte Hälfte des vierten Briefes an Serapion. Diese aber sind mit der in den *Orationes* und anderswo befindlichen dogmatischen Auslegung ausgewählter Bibelstellen völlig vergleichbar. Da diese Texte sehr gut bekannt und sozusagen unendlich diskutiert worden sind, ziehe ich es vor, wo möglich, die weniger bekannten Schriften des Athanasius zu berücksichtigen, unter anderen die *Epistulae Festales*, nur fragmentarisch im griechischen Urtext zugänglich, zum Teil aber in der syrischen, zum Teil auch in der koptischen Fassung verfügbar.[4]

Athanasius' Kanon der biblischen Bücher ist bekanntlich in *Ep. Fest.* 39, samt dem griechischen Text, aufbewahrt worden.[5] Auf die 22 alttestamentlichen Bücher folgt eine zusätzliche Aufzählung nützlicher Bücher, die außerhalb des Kanons bleiben; nämlich die Weisheit Salomos und das Buch Jesus Sirach, ferner

4 Für den syrischen Text und die griechischen Fragmente in englischer Übersetzung siehe A. Robertson, *St Athanasius*, NPNF 4, Nachdruck, Grand Rapids 1976. Für die koptischen Fragmente siehe Th. Lefort (Hrsg.), *Lettres festales et pastorales en copte*, CSCO 150 (Text) und 151 (französische Übersetzung), Löwen 1955; mit Supplementen von R. G. Coquin/ E. Lucchesi, *Un complément au corps copte des lettres festales d' Athanase*, in: OLoP 13, 1982, 137-142; R. G. Coquin, *Les lettres festales d'Athanase CPG 2102. Un nouveau complément: le manuscrit IFAO copte 25*, in: OLoP 15, 1984, 133-158 (Text und französische Übersetzung). Außerdem: P. Merendino, *Osterfestbriefe des Apa Athanasius. Aus dem Koptischen übersetzt und erläutert*, Düsseldorf 1965 (mir nicht zugänglich).

5 PG 26, 1435-1440.

Esther, Judit, Tobias, aber auch die Didache und der Hirt des Hermas. Von den Makkabäerbüchern wird nichts gesagt, noch werden sie überhaupt einmal zitiert. Die anderen genannten Schriften werden nicht als Apokryphen bezeichnet. Als Apokryphen, oder sogar Apographen, werden gefälschte Bücher des Henoch, des Jesaja und des Mose erwähnt: "Die Apographen sind Geschwätz; es ist vergeblich, jene zu beachten, da sie nutzlose und abscheuliche Aussagen sind" (Ep. 39, koptisch bei Lefort).

Wir bemerken hier erstens: die Grenzen des Kanons der heiligen Schrift sind hier nicht völlig erklärt worden. Die Anzahl von 22 kanonischen Büchern ist zweifellos herkömmlich; sie kommt bei Josephus c. *Apionem* vor,[6] und die zitierte Liste stimmt ungefähr, wenn auch nicht völlig, mit dem hebräischen Kanon überein. (Nebenbei sei bemerkt, daß Athanasius nur "gehört" hat, daß das hebräische Alphabet gleichfalls aus 22 Buchstaben besteht; offensichtlich hat er keine Kenntnis der hebräischen Sprache. Ferner, während Eusebius die verschiedenen griechischen Versionen des Alten Testaments regelmäßig zitiert und vergleicht, ist Athanasius ausschließlich mit der Septuaginta vertraut, die so selbstverständlich als Bibel der Kirche identifiziert ist, daß selbst eine Verweisung auf die ἑβδομήκοντα nur in der *Expositio Fidei* einmal vorkommt.) – Zweitens zählt Athanasius andere Bücher auf, "die nicht kanonisiert werden, die aber von den Vätern den Neugekommenen zum Lesen vorgeschrieben (τετυπωμένα) worden sind" usw. Die "Väter" werden nicht namentlich identifiziert, und allem Anschein nach bezieht sich Athanasius auf die Praxis der alexandrinischen Kirche, die offensichtlich nicht allgemeingültig war; man beachte die Einbeziehung der Didache und des Hermas. – Drittens, obgleich er keine Kommentare hinterlassen hat, scheint Athanasius mit dergleichen gut vertraut zu sein; als Zeichen dafür vermerken wir, daß er über eine reiche Fülle technischer Ausdrücke verfügt, wie etwa ἀλληγορεῖν, τύπος, πρόχειρος λέξις, βαθεῖα διάνοια usw. – von denen nur wenige häufig vorkommen, die aber als Gesamtheit auf tiefgehendes Studium verweisen. – Und viertens, als Exeget hat Athanasius den Vorteil, daß er die Regeln der Schriftauslegung bedacht hat.

6 C. Ap. 1. 38.

ATHANASIUS ALS EXEGET

Eine Skizze seiner exegetischen Prinzipien wurde von T. E. Pollard 1959 geliefert und hat zum Beispiel bei H. I. Sieben (1974) und Bertrand de Margerie (1980) Beifall gefunden.[7] Pollard zählt sechs Prinzipien auf: (I) die Suffizienz der heiligen Schrift, (II) die Abzweckung, σκοπός, derselben, (III) ihre Gewohnheit, ἔθος, womit (IV) der Sinn der Schrift beinahe zusammenfällt sowie (V) der sogenannte "Stil" derselben, womit das griechische Wort ἰδίωμα übersetzt wird, und (VI) die Notwendigkeit, den Kontext des jeweiligen Passus zu beachten, mit Hinweisen auf die wohlbekannte Formel καιρός, πρόσωπον, πρᾶγμα.

Diese Prinzipien sind, meines Erachtens, sehr unterschiedlich wichtig. Das erste, die Suffizienz, ist zweifellos wesentlich; so auch das letzte; doch wird die Suffizienz der Schrift als *Tatsache* behauptet, die Beachtung des Kontextes dagegen als *Aufgabe* gefordert. Im Gegensatz dazu sind der sogenannte "Sinn" und "Stil" der Heiligen Schrift nur je einmal erwähnt. Und wenn Athanasius wagt, das Ziel, οκοπός, der heiligen Schrift als ganzer zu erklären, so fühle ich mich, wie oft, ein bißchen skeptisch gesonnen.

Ganz anders Sieben und de Margerie, die beide den einschlägigen Passus mit Begeisterung hervorheben;[8] und zwar *Or.* 3.29: "Dies aber ist die Bedeutung und das Kennzeichen der heiligen Schrift (σκοπὸς τοίνυν καὶ χαρακτὴρ τῆς ἁγίας γραφῆς), wie wir oft gesagt haben, daß das Evangelium des Heilands, das sie enthält, zweierlei ist, nämlich daß er ewig Gott war und Sohn ist, und daß er unseretwegen Mensch geworden ist". Daß diese zweifache Kenntnis der Kern oder Höhepunkt der heiligen Schrift sei, muß nicht verneint werden; selbstverständlich jedoch ist die göttliche Absicht der Schrift mit diesem Bekenntnis nicht erschöpft; wozu sonst die zehn Gebote? Mit der sogenannten "Bedeutung" der heiligen Schrift weist Athanasius auf ein Theologumenon, das sich seinerzeit als wesentlich erwies, und der Kirche überragend

7 T. E. Pollard, *The Exegesis of Scripture and the Arian Controversy*, in: Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 41, 1959, 414-429. H. J. Sieben, *Herméneutique de l'exégèse dogmatique d'Athanase*, bei C. Kannengießer (Hrsg.). Politique et Theologie chez Athanase d'Alexandrie, ThH 27, Paris 1974, 195-214. B. de Margerie, *Introduction à l'histoire de l'exégèse*, Paris 1980, 1983.

8 Sieben S. 206, de Margerie S. 139.

wichtig geworden ist.[9] Allerdings mit gleichem Recht konnte etwa Irenäus die Einheit Gottes als Schöpfer und zugleich als Vater oder Augustinus die Notwendigkeit der göttlichen Gnade für den sündigen Menschen als Kern und Kennzeichen der heiligen Schrift betonen.

Diesen einleitenden Bemerkungen füge ich nur folgendes hinzu: Es genügt nicht, die Prinzipien der Schriftauslegung, wie sie Athanasius angibt, aus seinen Schriften zu sammeln; es muß darüber hinaus untersucht werden, inwieweit er tatsächlich jenen Prinzipien gefolgt ist. Diese Aufgabe, die bisher ein wenig vernachlässigt worden zu sein scheint, will ich im folgenden bedenken.

(1) Die Suffizienz der heiligen Schrift wird oft behauptet; so bekanntlich *Contra Gentes* 1, *De Synodis* 6, dazu *Ep. Fest.* 39, koptisch bei Lefort: "Also, da es auf der Hand liegt, daß das Zeugnis der Apographen überflüssig sowie belanglos ist – da die Schrift in jeder Hinsicht vollkommen ist –, soll der Lehrer nach den Worten der Schrift unterrichten". In der Tat lehrt jedoch Athanasius nicht, daß die Worte der Schrift ohne weiteres hinreichen, die Wahrheit mitzuteilen. Pollard und Sieben haben richtig bemerkt, daß er keine Konkurrenz zwischen den Worten der Schrift und ihrer herkömmlichen Auslegung kennt; vielmehr ist mit der Schrift die kirchliche Exegese derselben – und das heißt natürlich, die der zeitgenössischen alexandrinischen Kirche – mit einbezogen. "Diese Kennzeichen" – nämlich der heiligen Schrift – "kommen von den Aposteln durch die Väter", sagt er *Ep. Serp.* 2.8.[10] Die Häretiker gehen in die Irre, weil sie, vom Teufel verleitet, Sätze der Schrift behaupten, den Sinn der Schrift als ganzer dagegen mißdeuten. *Ad Ep. Aeg.* 4: 'Also der Gläubige (πιστός), der die Gnade besitzt, die geistlichen Dinge zu unterscheiden (τοῦ διακρίνειν τὰ πνευματικά), steht fest usw.; der Einfältige dagegen, der nicht gründlich katechisiert worden ist, da ein solcher nur die gesprochenen Worte versteht und der Bedeutung nicht inne wird, wird zugleich von ihren Ränken (μεθοδείαις) verführt", ebenda. In der oben zitierten *Ep. Fest.* 39 fährt

9 Vgl. Ep. ad Marc. 2-5: Der Psalter rekapituliere die ganze Schrift. Christologische Auslegung wird jedoch erst in c. 5 angedeutet.

10 Ep. Enc. 1 ad fin.

Athanasius fort: "Es geht nicht an, denen, die als Katechumenen mit ihrem Unterricht anfangen, die Worte der Schrift, die wie Mysterien verhüllt sind, auszulegen, diejenige Lehre dagegen, die sie benötigen, zu übergehen."

Die Schrift und ihre Auslegung bilden damit ein geschlossenes System. Im Vergleich zu Origenes finden wir Athanasius viel weniger bereit, auswärtige oder neugefundene Exegesen zu berücksichtigen, geschweige denn zu akzeptieren. Die Wahrheit ist ein für allemal überliefert worden; ein tieferes Verständnis derselben – βαθυτέρα διάνοια – kann zwar gesucht werden; korrigiert oder sogar erweitert werden kann sie nicht.

Aus der Suffizienz der Schrift scheint zu folgen, daß die hellenische Weisheit dem christlichen Glauben keinen Beitrag liefern konnte. Und in der Tat kann Athanasius die übliche Kritik an den Philosophen, als sich widersprechend, übernehmen; so *Decr.* 4. Und bekanntlich hält er es für nützlich, die griechischen Mythen zu rügen; so besonders in *Contra Gentes*. Seine Kritik ist jedoch beträchtlich von den Philosophen beeinflußt. Diese – und hauptsächlich Piaton – werden gelegentlich zitiert (so z.B. *Politikos* 273 bei *De Inc.* 43)[11]; oder nachgeahmt. In *Ep. ad Marc.* 27 wird die dreiteilige Seele erwähnt, worüber die heilige Schrift natürlich schweigt. Viel wichtiger ist meines Erachtens der Gegensatz zwischen αἰσθητά und νοητά, der so tief in der alexandrinischen Tradition verwurzelt ist, daß er vermutlich ohne jedes Bewußtsein von seinem heidnischen Ursprung bemüht werden kann. Die Schrift kennt zwar den Gegensatz zwischen Himmel und Erde, zwischen Sichtbarem und Unsichtbarem, ferner zwischen dem wörtlichen Sinn ihrer Ausdrücke und ihrer höheren Bedeutung – vgl. die Verwendung der Allegorie bei Paulus. Solchen Gegensatz versteht Athanasius ohne jedes philosophische Gerüst zu erklären; so *Or.* 3.18: "Es ist die Gewohnheit der göttlichen Schrift, die natürlichen Wesen als Bilder und Beispiele für die Menschen zu nehmen, damit die freiwilligen Handlungen derselben gezeigt werden können." Aber er scheut sich nicht, denselben Gegensatz mit Hilfe recht platonischer Wendungen zu benennen. Der Christ soll sich mit ἀσώματα beschäftigen (*Or.* 3.1). Gott selbst ist ἄϋλος καὶ ἀσώματος (*Decr.* 10.5). Solche philosophischen Ausdrücke können gelegentlich mit Unterstützung der Schrift benutzt werden; z.B. νοητῶς νοεῖν τὰ παρατιθέμενα wird Sprüche 23, 1 als Regel des Tischbenehmens, *Syn.* 42 und *Ep. Marc.* 17 dagegen als Prinzip der Schriftauslegung verstanden. Die Schrift aber lehrt nicht, den Sündenfall als ἀπόστασις τῆς τῶν νοητῶν θεωρίας, wie *Contra Gentes* 4, zu betrachten.

(2) Die *Konsequenz* der Heiligen Schrift im allgemeinen wird meines Wissens nur zweimal behauptet, und zwar *Ep. Marc.* 9 und *Ep. Fest.* 19. 3; die Übereinstimmung des Alten und Neuen Testaments dagegen kommt häufig zum Ausdruck. Die vieldiskutierten Diskrepanzen der Schrift – so z.B. im Stammbaum des Heilands – werden anscheinend nicht beachtet. Als Beispiel solcher Erörterung darf jedoch folgendes mitgeteilt werden. Im allgemeinen – und das wieder im Gegensatz zu Origenes – kommt es nur selten vor, daß Athanasius seine persönliche Auffassung eines biblischen Textes vorführen will.[12] Das tut er jedoch in *Ep. Fest.* 39, koptisch bei Coquin (1984).[13] "Der Heiland", schreibt er, "hat es befohlen: 'Ihr sollt euch nicht Lehrer nennen lassen' (Mt. 23, 10); der heilige Jakobus dagegen mahnt: 'Es sollen nicht zu viele von euch Lehrer werden'", woraus natürlich gefolgert werden kann, daß es *einigen* gestattet sei, Lehrer zu heißen; ferner nennt sich Paulus "Lehrer der Heiden in Glauben und Wahrheit". Athanasius schreibt dazu: "Da ich dieses durchdachte, kam mir ein Einfall in den Sinn, den ihr prüfen sollt" – worauf er erklärt, daß die sogenannten christlichen Lehrer eigentlich auch Jünger sind; sie hören die Worte des einzigen wahren Lehrers, um sie mitzuteilen.

Wie bekannt, pflegt Athanasius die Arianer zu tadeln, "weil sie sorgfältig ausgewählte Texte aus deren Kontext absondern, die sie dann buchstäblich auslegen, deren Kontext jedoch samt der allgemeinen Lehre der Schrift vernachlässigen"; so Pollard 416. Athanasius selbst sucht diesen Fehler dadurch zu vermeiden, daß er eine ganze Reihe von verwandten Texten anführt, die einander bestätigen sollen. (Als Beispiel finden wir im ersten Brief an Serapion 55 Zitate aus 10 Büchern des Alten und 16 Büchern

11 Vgl. Eus. P.E. 11.34.4, genaue Zitierung, bei Athanasius vielleicht auswendig wiedergegeben.

12 Siehe jedoch Ep. Fest. 19 (unten) und Ep. Ser. 4.11.

13 Siehe Anm. 4.

des Neuen Testaments gesammelt). Ob die Arianer dieses Verfahren tatsächlich nicht nachzuahmen verstanden, darüber kann nichts sicher behauptet werden.

Fragen wir doch: Hält sich Athanasius an seine eigenen Prinzipien? – nämlich daß biblische Texte nicht abgesondert behandelt werden sollen? Im großen und ganzen neige ich dazu, dies zu bejahen. Trotzdem sei folgendes Beispiel beachtet. Athanasius zitiert dreimal Jesaja 1, 11 πλήρης εἰμί, dem Kontext zum Trotz, als Ausdruck göttlichen Reichtums.[14] Das Vorbild steht möglicherweise bei Origenes in einem Katenenfragment des verlorenen fünften Buchs des Johanneskommentars (Preuschen S. 491); andere Exegeten – Ps. Barnabas, Athenagoras, Irenäus und Clemens deuten es richtig: Gott sei der Opfer satt. Athanasius könnte jedoch erwidern, daß er Jesaja dem Sinn der Schrift gemäß gedeutet hat; lesen wir nicht, Epheser 1, 23, "die Fülle dessen, der alles in allem erfüllt"?

Als weiteres Beispiel erwähnen wir die Exegese von Ps. 105, 15, "Tastet meine Gesalbten nicht an". Mit dieser Bibelstelle tadelt Athanasius die Meletianer, die anscheinend die Leichname der Heiligen ausgraben wollten, um sie mumifizieren zu lassen.[15] Diese Anwendung jenes Passus ist vermutlich in der ganzen christlichen Literatur ohne Parallele.

Hieraus leuchtet ein, daß Athanasius ein idealisiertes Bild von der Tragweite der Schrift besitzt. Natürlich hat er keine Ahnung davon, daß ihre Worte mit Rücksicht auf die Umstände und die Sprechweise der einzelnen Schriftsteller ausgelegt werden müssen.

(3) Den Kontext jedes einzelnen Passus der Schrift zu beachten, kommt daher als Aufgabe in Betracht, die mit der Behauptung ihrer jeweiligen Tragweite verbunden ist. Laut Athanasius zitieren die Arianer ihre Beweistexte ohne Rücksicht darauf; man sollte dagegen jedesmal "das Ziel, die Person, die Sache", bzw. "die Absicht" erforschen. Die genannten Formeln sind von Sieben mit Hinweis auf Tertullian, Origenes und Hilarius ausführlich diskutiert worden. Ich bin selbst dazu geneigt, den Ursprung derselben in den rhetorischen Lehrbüchern zu suchen,

14 Or. 2. 29, Ep. Ser. 3. 6, Ep. Fest. 19. 2.
15 Ep. Fest. 41, S. 43 Lefort.

die die Themen, στάσεις, des Redners verschiedenartig aufzählen; typisch ist die spätere lateinische Formel: Quis, quid, ubi, quibus auxiliis, cur, quomodo, quando. So finden wir *Or.* 1. 54 καιρός, πρόσωπον, πρᾶγμα, d. h. quis, quid, quando; ebd. 2. 8 διάνοια, καιρός, πρόσωπον, ungefähr entsprechend *Deer.* 14 καιρός, πρόσωπον, χρεία, d. h. quis, cur, quando.[16] Hier allerdings ergibt sich eigentlich keine 'triade herméneutique', kein Prinzip der Schriftauslegung im allgemeinen, wie es Sieben sehen will. Die genannten Kriterien werden ausnahmslos dazu benutzt, die arianische Bibelauslegung zu entkräften, d. h. den Befund der Schrift mit der kirchlichen Doktrin der Menschwerdung in Einklang zu bringen.

Wenden wir uns abschließend von den Prinzipien der Bibelauslegung ab, um die Praxis des Athanasius, die von der Theorie manchmal abweicht, kurz zu skizzieren. Es besteht meines Erachtens ein erheblicher Unterschied zwischen der Behandlung der geschichtlichen und derjenigen der prophetischen Bücher des Alten Testaments. Hinsichtlich der erstgenannten herrscht weitgehend ein geschichtlicher Realismus. Athanasius pflegt zum Beispiel die Patriarchen aufzuzählen: Sie zeugten Söhne (*Inc.* 35), sie besuchten die Wüste (*Ep. Fest.* 24), sie litten (ebd. 29), sie starben und wurden begraben (ebd. 41). Eine chronologische Beweisführung – und das wieder einmal als persönliche Erwägung angeführt – finden wir in *Ep. Fest.* 19. Anfänglich wurden die moralischen Gebote am Berg Sinai übergeben; erst später, als das Volk die Götzen zu verehren anfing, wurden Opfer gefordert. Die scheinbare Diskrepanz, etwa bei Jesaja 1, 12, wird damit gelöst. Die Geschichte des Sündenfalls wird nicht – wie gelegentlich behauptet wird – allegorisiert: Adam wird nicht, wie bei Philon, als Symbol des menschlichen Geistes betrachtet, sondern als idealisierter Platoniker dargestellt. Sein Verbrechen – ein Mangel, freilich, an *Theoria* – bleibt geschichtliches Ereignis; der Heiland hat das Tor des Himmels geöffnet, das, seit er Adam aus dem Garten vertrieben hatte, verschlossen war, so *Ep. Fest.* 43.[17]

16 Vgl. auch Or. 1. 55, und kürzer ebd. 2. 7 (πότε, πρὸς τί), Sent. Dion. 4. 4 (καιρός, πρόσωπον). Quelle vielleicht Origenes Princ. 1. 1. 4; vgl. auch Clemens Paed. 2. 14. 4, Str. 2. 137. 3.
17 Gr. Text (Kosmas) bei Lefort S. 52; vgl. auch S. 20 Anm. 'Et post alia'.

Mit geschichtlichem Realismus meinen wir natürlich nicht, daß Athanasius die Geschichte säkularisiert. Selbstverständlich sieht er den göttlichen Logos in den Ereignissen tätig. "Dieser ist es, der ehedem das Volk aus Ägypten holte, der aber nachher uns alle erlöst hat" – so in *Ep. Fest.* 10.[18] Meist ist die Exegese im strikten Sinn typologisch; der Unterschied zwischen Typ oder Schatten und Wahrheit kommt in den *Epistulae Festales* besonders häufig zum Ausdruck. Die Ereignisse jedoch, die als Typ oder Schatten beschrieben werden, kamen wirklich vor. Als Beispiel vergleicht Athanasius den Schall der Festtrompeten mit der christlichen Verkündigung; es wird aber niemals angedeutet, daß sie keine wirklichen Blasinstrumente waren. Die Überlegenheit des Evangeliums besteht gerade darin, daß es ein geistliches Faktum ist.

Eigentliche Allegorisierung kommt also verhältnismäßig selten vor. Als Beispiel zitieren wir folgendes, aus *Ep. Fest.* 24: "Der große Mose, als er sich von Ägypten entfernte – das heißt aber von den irdischen Werken, die uns in der Finsternis halten – sprach mit Gott von Angesicht zu Angesicht".

Mit der Auslegung der Prophetenbücher steht es etwas anders, und das natürlich, weil bildhafte Ausdrücke bei den Propheten häufig benutzt werden. Freilich ist die prophetische Einsicht auch außerhalb dieser Bücher zu finden. So *Ep. Fest.* 6: Abraham, "verehrte, als er seinen Sohn opferte, den Sohn Gottes; und als er daran gehindert wurde, Isaak zu opfern, sah er den Messias in dem Widder". In *Ep. Fest.* 7 finden wir eine Weiterentwicklung der Allegorie der Sprüche 9, 1-5: "Kommt, esset von meinem Brot und trinkt von dem Wein, den ich gemischt habe", samt Hinweis auf Joh. 6, 48: "Ich bin das Brot des Lebens". Auch wird das Gesetz allegorisiert; ein auffällendes Beispiel bietet sich in demselben Brief. Die Sünder "begraben die Seele in Sünden und Torheiten, indem sie sich mit toter Nahrung sättigen ... die das Gesetz verboten hat, indem es figürlich mahnt: 'Ihr sollt nicht den Adler essen, samt jedem toten Vogel, der Leichname ißt' ". Mit dieser ziemlich freien Wiedergabe von Leviticus 11

18 Vgl. Ep. 41, Coquin 1984 S. 156: 'Es war nicht das Blut des Lammes selbst, das den Verderber verhinderte und das Volk aus Ägypten freiließ, sondern es ist der Heiland, der im Blut war, der dies getan hat.'

werden eher die Genußmenschen getadelt als, wie üblich, die Angriffslustigen. Höchstwahrscheinlich denkt Athanasius an den Paidagogos des Clemens, der mit Hinweis auf dieselbe Bibelstelle jene zwei Laster unmittelbar nacheinander verurteilt.

Mittels Allegorese wagt es Athanasius sogar, den Patriarchen Issaschar als seinen Vorläufer in der exegetischen Arbeit zu feiern. In *Ep. Fest.* 13 wird Genesis 49, 14 zitiert: "Issaschar hat das Gute begehrt, da er zwischen den Erbgütern (κλήρος) ausruhte.[19] Da er nämlich von göttlicher Liebe verwundet war, so wie die Braut im Hohenlied, hat er aus der heiligen Schrift Wohlstand gesammelt; denn sein Geist wurde nicht lediglich vom alten, sondern von beiden Erbgütern bezaubert. Daher, als er seine Flügel sozusagen ausbreitete, sah er von ferne die himmlische Ruhe. Und da das hiesige Land aus solch schönen Werken besteht, um wieviel mehr soll wahrlich das himmlische aus solchen bestehen, da es immer neu ist und nimmer alt wird."

Eine halbe Stunde genügt nicht, um die Exegese des Athanasius hinreichend zu erläutern. Ich hoffe, wenigstens gezeigt zu haben, daß diese Aufgabe der Mühe wert ist.

19 Zu Gen. 49, 14-16 liefert die Biblia Patristica bis auf Epiphanius keine weiteren Zitierungen. Das Wort κλῆροι im Sinn der zwei Testamente kommt in Eus. Ps.-Komm. PG 23, 700 vor. Der dort vorliegende Text, Ps. 67, 14 LXX, wird bei Athanasius nicht zitiert.

XII

THE SCRIPTURES AND THE SOUL OF CHRIST IN ATHANASIUS

No general agreement has yet been reached about Athanasius' teaching, or absence of teaching, on the soul of Christ. The great majority of scholars now agree that the two books against Apollinaris are not from his hand; so those who uphold the traditional opinion that Athanasius did not fail to attribute a soul to Christ are faced with the difficulty that he never makes a direct avowal of it; the nearest approaches are a passage in the *Tomus ad Antiochenos* of 362, c. 7, recording the confession that οὐ σῶμα ἄψυχον οὐδ' ἀναίσθητον οὐδ' ἀνόητον εἶχεν ὁ Σωτήρ, since he brought salvation not only to the body but to the soul; and a passage in the *ad Epictetum* 7 which repeats the latter point. It is noted that no noun is used for the soul of Christ, and that the phrase οὐκ ἄψυχον could mean simply 'not lifeless';[1] and further, that Athanasius' normal way of describing Christ's incarnate life persists unaltered in his latest works; he conceives the Logos becoming, or assuming, σάρξ, and locates his human emotions and experiences in that σάρξ.

Various replies have been made to these objections. On the one hand it has been explained (rightly, I think) that Athanasius does not habitually think of σάρξ as just one element in the human *compositum*; most commonly it means, rather, 'humanity'. In that case the σάρξ of Christ is not to be understood as contrasting with, or excluding, a ψυχή; indeed, it is added, Athanasius' whole understanding of the humanity assumed by the Logos implies the presence of a soul. But it remains difficult to see why, on this showing, Athanasius did not make the implication clear. On the other hand it has been argued (wrongly, I think) that the question of Christ's soul was not a matter of debate before 362, or at least that it was eclipsed by the more pressing question of his divinity.[2] It has also been claimed (more justifiably) that to attribute a human soul to Christ would have been an embarrassment; either as recalling Origen's doctrine and suggesting a separate personality linked with the

Logos by a merely moral union; or as accounting for Christ's thoughts and actions in terms of a complete humanity, so that the operation of the Logos is reduced to a mere external inspiration—a fault alleged against Paul of Samosata and later against Marcellus. This argument, however, is two-edged; if it explains why Athanasius was reluctant to profess such a belief, might it not also suggest that he was reluctant to hold it?

Most recent discussion has been influenced by the work of M. Richard and A. Grillmeier. Richard considered Athanasius' reply to the Arian argument that the human emotions and experience of Christ prove him inferior to the Father; Athanasius, he points out, never makes the obvious reply by saying that these experiences attach to the soul of Christ and not directly to the Logos, although Eustathius is known to have used this argument and Athanasius can hardly have been ignorant of it.[3] Grilimeier showed that Athanasius pictures the death of Christ as a separation of the Logos from his flesh, the Logos descending to the underworld, the flesh discarded, the soul ignored.[4] Grilimeier however concludes with what looks like a 'crossbench' position, holding that for Athanasius the soul of Christ is not a 'theological factor' but is perhaps a 'physical factor'. It is not necessary for his picture of the person and work of Christ; on the other hand it is not excluded.[5] And certainly Athanasius was not thought to have excluded it; the condemnation of Apollinaris in no way diminished the high regard in which Athanasius was held by both Alexandrian and Antiochene theologians. Nevertheless attempts are still being made to rescue Athanasius from the unfavourable light in which Richard and Grilimeier are thought to have placed him.[6]

In this complex debate, it seems to me that too little attention has been paid to the possible relevance of Athanasian exegesis. Some scholars have even appeared to suggest that exegetical texts provide no evidence for the writer's real views. In an admirable piece of research Henri de Riedmatten showed that Eusebius never mentions a soul in Christ except in connection with scriptural texts; but he has been interpreted as showing that Eusebius denied Christ a soul.[7] Clearly one needs to determine how Eusebius understands the relevant texts if one is to see why he makes no dogmatic use of them. And the same can be done for Athanasius, though admittedly the material is less abundant; for though one can find some relevant comments on scripture in the works most commonly consulted, much less of his purely exegetical writings has survived; and the most considerable of these, the *Expositiones in Psalmos*, has not come down to us in a complete and reliable text. Nevertheless we can and should inquire how Athanasius treated the texts in scripture which speak of a ψυχή and have, or were thought to have, a christological significance.

In the New Testament the 'soul' of Christ, his ψυχή, is mentioned in thirteen places. Not all of these are significant for our purpose; at Mt 2:20 οἱ ζητοῦντες τὴν ψυχὴν τοῦ παιδίου could arguably be discounted, since it is naturally rendered 'those who sought the young child's life' (cf. III Kings 19:10 LXX); two references in Mark (10:45, 14:34) merely duplicate corresponding texts in Matthew; and in John 10:11-18 four references to Christ's ψυχή appear within a single context of thought. This leaves us with a minimum list of seven passages, namely Mt. 20:28 = Mk 10:45; Mt. 26:38 = Mk. 14:34; John 10:11-18, 12:27 and 15:13; Acts 2:27 (from Psalm 15:10 LXX); and I John 3:16. These texts, again, are not wholly independent, but embody three traditions: (i) Jesus troubled in his ψυχή (Mt. 26:38 parr., John 12:27); (ii) His surrender and recovery of his ψυχή (Mt. 20:28 parr., John 10:11-18, 15:13, I John 3:16); (iii) The deliverance of his ψυχή, Acts 2:27.

How does Athanasius treat these texts? We may begin by considering the works most commonly studied, viz. those indexed by Müller from PG 25 and 26, deducting (as I think we must) the Fourth Oration, the *de Incarnatione et c. Arianos*, the two books against Apollinaris and the *Sermo Maior*, besides some smaller pieces, and also the *de virginitate* printed in TU 29. This still leaves a large corpus embodying well over 1000 New Testament quotations in all. But only two of our seven texts are ever quoted with the word ψυχή included, and they are quoted only in controversy with the Arians over the interpretation of the Passion. John 12:27 appears in a list of texts used by the Arians at *c. Ar.* 3.26, and reappears in Athanasius' reply, ibid 54 and 57; and John 10:18, proclaiming Christ's authority over his ψυχή, is used as a kind of counterweight to the other in the same two chapters. The use of John 12:27 by the Arians is worth noting, in view of the *communis opinio* that they denied Christ a soul.

A few more such quotations can be found, however, in some less familiar texts. Mt. 26:38 is quoted in Festal Letter 6.7 (Syriac version, translated at PG 26, 1387A) and 24 (Coptic version, p. 41 = p. 13 of French translation).[8] The Coptic homily On Charity and Temperance quotes John 10:11 conflated with 15:13 (ibid p. 111 = 89 of F.T.). There

is an allusion, though not a direct quotation, to John 10:11 also in the *Expositiones in Psalmos*, on Ps. 46:5 (PG 27, 217 C 3); and John 10:18 is quoted on 87:5, ibid 380 C.

We can enlarge our field of view, however, by considering some Old Testament texts which were interpreted in a christological sense. Most of these occur in the Psalms; in fact I have not been able to think of any other such text containing the word ψυχή except Is. 53:11-12 and 61:10. Athanasius does not appear to quote either of these, though (as one would expect) he uses Is. 53:1-8; perhaps v. 10a may have presented a difficulty which discouraged him from continuing the quotation, since it could suggest that the Father must 'cleanse' the Son, presumably from some moral injury.

There is, then, a group of passages in the Psalms in which the word ψυχή is used, and which were commonly read in a christological sense. By far the most important is Ps. 15:10 (LXX), on which a christological significance is already imposed by St. Peter's use of it in Acts 2:27 (though in the repetition at 2:31 the word ψυχή disappears). This psalm is also the only one of the group to be used in Athanasius' dogmatic works; and that in two contexts. It appears twice in a developed paraphrase of Peter's speech in *c. Ar.* 2.16, designed to show, against the Arians, that Christ is not a mere man as the Jews supposed. In each case the correct LXX wording is reproduced; and after the first quotation Athanasius says expressly that this verse, with some other texts, applies not to David but to Christ; cf. Acts 2:25a and 31. For Athanasius, therefore, the phrase 'my soul' indicates Christ's soul, understood as a personal entity descending to, and delivered from, the underworld; though at the second quotation, where only the crucial first half of the verse is used, we find a characteristic modification; he avoids the wording of Acts 2:24 and 32 that 'God raised up' Jesus (ἀνέστησεν), which no doubt he thought could be useful to the Arians, and affirms the sovereign power of Christ himself: Christ not only rose himself (ἐξαναστῆναι) but roused (ἐγεῖραι) from the tombs the men who had been long dead. Here then, 'my soul' carries a sense which is not easily distinguishable from 'myself'.

When the psalm verse reappears at *c. Ar.* 3.57 a rather different impression is made. Athanasius has been arguing against the view that the human experiences of the Logos prove him less than fully divine. He has just mentioned John 12:27 (νῦν ἡ ψυχή μου τετάραχται) as said ἀνθρωπίνως by the Saviour, and balanced it by John 10:18, where the Lord

said—θεϊκῶς, he observes—ἐξουσίαν ἔχω θεῖναι τὴν ψυχήν μου etc. Shortly aftetwards he quotes Ps. 15:10 complete; but it has of course been remarked, by Richard[9] and others, that his comments on all these passages, with one exception, ignore the word ψυχή, assign the 'troubling' to his *flesh*, and talk simply of the union and reunion of the *Logos* with his flesh or his body; so τὸ μὲν γὰρ ταράττεσθαι τῆς σαρκὸς ἴδιον ἦν (!), τὸ δὲ ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν θεῖναι καὶ λαβεῖν, ὅτε βούλεται, τὴν ψυχὴν, οὐκετι τοῦτο ἴδιον ἀνθρώπων .... Ἄνθρωπος γὰρ .... μὴ θέλων ἀποθνήσκει· ὁ δὲ κύριος, ἀθάνατος αὐτὸς ὤν, σάρκα δὲ θνητὴν ἔχων, ἐπ' ἐξουσίας εἶχεν .. ἀπὸ σώματος χωρισθῆναι καὶ τοῦτο πάλιν ἀναλαβεῖν .... And after the quotation of Ps. 15:10 he adds: Ἔπρεπε γὰρ φθαρτὴν οὖσαν τὴν σάρκα .... διὰ τὸν ἐνδυσάμενον αὐτὴν Λόγον ἄφθαρτον διαμένειν. One can see that such passages justify the comment that although he uses scriptural references to the ψυχή of Christ, Athanasius readily slips back into a 'Logos-sarx' descriptive scheme.[10]

The case is perceptibly different, however, if we turn to his *Expositiones in Psalmos*. This work has been relatively little used because of its poor text. It has not been transmitted in a direct tradition, but only through a numbered series of extracts preserved in catenae. The standard edition of the Greek extracts by Montfaucon, reproduced in Migne, contains much extraneous matter and has long been recognized as inadequate. However, a recent publication by G. M. Vian[11] adds some 150 further Greek fragments (though many of them are quite brief) and, perhaps more important, provides a list of passages printed in Migne which are not to be assigned to Athanasius. Some help can be got from the Syriac versions, which Vian has of course employed; there is a version *in extenso*—i.e. an originally complete version of the Greek excerpts, though not of the whole work as it once existed—of which unfortunately something between one-eighth and one-sixth alone survives, and an abbreviated version preserved complete.[12] A fragmentary Coptic version also helps to confirm the authenticity of the Athanasian texts.[13]

We shall consider Athanasius' comments on the following verses: Ps. 15:10; 17:5; 21:21 and 30; 34:11 and 17; 46:5; 54:17-19; 56:2 and 5; 68:2, 11, 19 and 21; 87:4 and 5 (all LXX references). Ps. 15:10 has pride of place and will be left till last. For these verses the Syriac longer version is lacking, and the shorter version I consider unhelpful, except for Psalms 68 and 87. On the other hand a good deal of help can be gained by considering parallels in Eusebius' Commentary on the Psalms which, it will be shown below, was used by Athanasius.

Ps. 17:5 deserves only passing mention, since Athanasius takes it that David is speaking for himself and thankfully describing his deliverance from his enemies; a prophecy of the 'descent' of the Lord (Christ) appears first at v. 8. However the comment is worth noting, as showing one of the ways in which Athanasius will use ψυχή: *Περιέοχον με ὠδῖνες θανάτου*. Οὐδενός, φησιν, ἐνταῦθα πολέμου θνήτου μέμνηται, ἀλλὰ δυνάμεων ἀφανῶν, ἔνδον τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ κυκλουσῶν. Athanasius normally takes 'enemies' to mean opposing powers, or demons; and the 'soul' here indicates, not a biological life-principle, but the inward moral nature which is exposed to their assaults.

Psalm 21 is of course regularly interpreted of the Passion of Christ. At verse 21 we have a laconic comment in which the word ψυχή is ignored: *Ῥῦσαι ἀπὸ ῥομφαίας τὴν ψυχήν μου*. Τὴν κακίαν τῶν Ἰουδαίων καὶ τὴν ἄνοιαν διά τούτων σημαίνει διὰ ῥομφαίας καὶ χειρὸς κυνὸς καὶ λέοντος καὶ κεράτων μονοκερώτων.

Much the same is found at 21:30-1: *Καὶ ἡ ψυχή μου ζῇ, καὶ τὸ σπέρμα μου δουλεύσει αὐτῷ*. Ἁγία γὰρ καὶ ἄμωμος ἡ Χριστοῦ γέγονε ζωή, ἣν πεποίηται μετὰ σαρκὸς ἐπὶ γῆς. Μόνος γὰρ αὐτὸς οὐκ ἐποίησεν ἁμαρτίαν καίτοι καθ' ἡμᾶς γεγονὼς, καὶ σάρκα λαβὼν τὴν φιλαμαρτήμονα (N.B.) Σπέρμα δὲ Θεοῦ νοηθεῖεν ἂν οἱ δι' αὐτοῦ κεκλημένοι διά τῆς πίστεως. The comments could easily suggest that Athanasius deliberately refrains from taking up the indication of a ψυχή in Christ, and that on 21:30 init. looks like a classic formulation of Logos-sarx christology. Nevertheless there is the possibility that ἡ ψυχή μου is simply taken as a periphrasis for ἐγώ, as we should say 'I myself'; this is clearly the case in at least two non-christological passages. Thus at 10:1 (p. 93 A) *πῶς ἐρεῖτε τῇ ψυχῇ μου*; is glossed πῶς μοι ἐρεῖτε; and at 102:1 (p. 432 B) *Εὐλόγει, ἡ ψυχή μου, τὸν Κύριον* is explained Αὐτὸς ἑαυτὸν ἐπὶ τὸν ὕμνον διεγείρει, though curiously enough at 103:1 (p. 463 A) the very same phrase is taken differently: Διδάσκει καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ μεγάλῃ προνοίᾳ τοῦ Θεοῦ εὐλογεῖν τῇ ψυχῇ τὸν Θεόν, where τῇ ψυχῇ is an instrumental phrase, implying presumably a conscious and deliberate act of worship rather than something formal and mechanical. The variation may warn us against expecting too much method in Athanasius' use of ψυχή.

Psalm 34, says Athanasius, is written from the character (ἐκ προσώπου) of the believer tempted by spiritual enemies; but it also introduces the 'person' of Christ and his sufferings. He notes this attribution as beginning at verse 11, so that a comment on verse 7 restored by Vian (fr. 24, p. 22), which mentions ψυχή, cannot be given a christological reference.

Eusebius here is less systematic; he tends to think of David describing his own troubles, but by an afterthought at p. 305 A he attributes verse 3 to the Saviour κατὰ τὸ ἀνθρώπινον, including a reference to his ψυχή: *Εἶπον τῇ ψυχῇ μου Σωτηρία σου εἰμὶ ἐγώ*, a prayer of course addressed to the Father. So also verse 12, he thinks, can be attributed either to David (301 D) or to the Saviour (305 D). Athanasius clearly refers verse 12 to Christ, but his comment appears to ignore ψυχή, which Eusebius repeatedly mentions; at most one might say that it helps to fix the sense of the word ἀτεκνία. Athanasius has: *Ἀνταπεδίδοαάν μοι πονηρὰ ἀντὶ ἀγαθῶν καὶ ἀτεκνίαν τῇ ψυχῇ μου*. Τοῦτό φησι διὰ τὸ ἀναξίους αὐτοὺς ὀφθῆναι τοῦ κληθῆναι τέκνα Θεοῦ ὅπερ μάλιστα ἐγνώριζεν αὐτὸς κατὰ τὸ, Ἱεροσάκις ... (Mt. 23:37). Eusebius discusses the sense of ἀτεκνία as lack of spiritual children at 301 AB, 304 A, 308 A, noting that the verse can be assigned either to David (304 A) or to Christ (305 D-308 A), and introducing Mt. 23:37 in the latter passage.

A brief comment on verse 13 is printed by Migne at p. 172 B 6; but this, it appears, is not by Athanasius (Vian p. 68). And at verse 17 Athanasius' surviving comment is too brief to be informative: *Ἀποκατάστησον τὴν ψυχήν μου ἀπὸ τῆς κακουργίας αὐτῶν*. Πάντα ὅσα πάσχει ἢ λέγει, ὑπὲρ τῆς ἡμετέρας σωτηρίας ποιεῖ, stopping there according to Vian. Possibly he thinks of this verse as a model prayer uttered by Christ on behalf of humanity, or perhaps of the believer, as in Eusebius, p. 216 A, where Christ 'recites the whole psalm with reference to every soul that is dedicated to him'; in which case 'my soul' would be understood to refer to the soul of the believer.

At 46:5 the word ψυχή does not appear in the LXX text, but Athanasius attributes it to Christ by an allusion to John 10:11, as noted above (p. 236): *Τὴν καλλόνην Ἰακὼβ ἣν ἠγάπησεν* Τὴν καλλόνην Ἰακώβ φησι τὴν προφητέιαν τὴν περὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν ... (Gen. 49:10). Καὶ τίνι ἠγαπημένη ἢ τῷ τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ τεθεικότι ὑπὲρ αὐτῆς; The rendering 'life' of course easily suggests itself; but ψυχή is not quite equivalent to ζωή, for ζωὴν θεῖναι sounds unnatural; which perhaps suggests that ψυχή has a rather more substantive sense: not merely 'life', but the principle of life.

Psalm 54 yields some comments which are most instructive, provided that the rather delicate problems of interpretation can be convincingly resolved. The psalm naturally suggests the Passion of Christ; but there are phrases which resist this interpretation, notably the reference to the speaker's 'foolishness' (ἀδολεσχία) in v. 3 and to his dismay and terror (especially δειλία θανάτου) in v. 5. Eusebius, in a somewhat involved

discussion, explains that David cannot he recounting his own experiences throughout; he foresees the Passion; and it is he, 'the prophet', who feels horror and confusion 'which he calls foolishness' in view of the sufferings of Christ (p. 476A). Athanasius takes a similar line in commenting on these verses; he makes the 'prophet' refer to the Saviour in the third person (p. 252 A 6, B 10-12, 15-16), and it is his foreseen experiences which strike the prophet with horror and dismay. But he has also said, at 252 A 12-14, that the prophet speaks *for* the Saviour: Πάντα γὰρ τὰ κατὰ τοῦ Σωτῆρος συμβάντα πρὸς τὸ οἰκεῖον ἀναφέρει πρόσωπον; this seems to mean that he describes the Saviour's experiences as if they were his own, using the first person; thus 'my familiar friend' in v. 14 refers to Judas; we might (alternatively) say that the verse is spoken *ex persona Christi*.

Probably, therefore, the same is true of vv. 17-19, where there are three references to ψυχή in Athanasius' comments, the first two based on the text of v. 19 LXX; v. 19b then means that Christ is assailed, whereas Athasasius nowhere suggests that the 'prophet's' life is in danger. If so, then in vv. 17 and 18 we have Christ appealing to the Father for help λυτρωθῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἀπο τῶν ζητοῦντων ἀπολέσαι αὐτήν, and praising God ὅτι δὴ εἰσακούσας λελύτρωσαι τὴν ψυχήν μου. And both these will be cases where Athanasius has introduced a reference to the ψυχή of Christ which is not directly imposed by the text of the psalm.

In these verses it is not quite clear whether Athanasius has physical or spiritual enemies in view; but he generally prefers the latter interpretation wherever possible, and the use of λύτρωσαι fits it well; in which case the word ψυχή leans rather towards the meaning 'soul' (as liable to temptation) rather than 'life'. The comment on 19b, however, is Ὅτι οἱ πολλοὶ συνίεσαν κατ' ἐμοῦ βουλόμενοι τὴν ψυχήν μου ἐξαίρειν, where 'life' is a possible rendering.

In Ps 56 Athanasius follows the preface in referring to David's own adventures in the cave, but remarks that the psalm can also apply to Christ. However verse 2, he says, is spoken ἐκ προσώπου τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος; Christ therefore utters a prayer which is really appropriate to a *human* petitioner, and indeed at p. 257D it is half implied that the address is made *to* Christ, not to the Father, since there is a reference to Christ's offer of protection in Mt. 23:37. In this case, then, it would seem that the two following references to ψυχή should not be pressed as evidence for a soul in Christ; in any case the clause ἐν σοὶ πέποιθε ἡ ψυχή μου is explained ἐπὶ τῇ σῇ βοηθείᾳ τὴν ἐλπίδα ἔχω. Thus it seems that ἡ ψυχή

μου is understood as 'I myself'. But at v. 5 the clause ἐρρύσατο τὴν ψυχήν μου ἐκ μέσου σκύμνων receives the cryptic comment σκύμνων τῶν νοητῶν δηλονότι: this I think means 'spiritual lion-cubs', i.e. demons, rather than simply 'metaphorical lion-cubs' who could be physical assailants; here, then, the sense of ψυχή inclines to 'soul' rather than 'life'; but once again we have a model prayer appropriate to humanity rather than a personal profession by Christ himself.

Psalm 68 was regularly applied to the Passion, and is so noted in the Epistle to Marcellinus, c. 26. Four verses mention a ψυχή which is attributed to Christ; and here we have the help of the longer Syriac version. Two general points are to be noted. First, here as elsewhere, Athanasius' work closely resembles the extensive treatment of Eusebius, which at this point is preserved in full, and often affords clues to the much briefer surviving remarks of Athanasius. Secondly, however, Athanasius in his Hypothesis describes the psalm as containing a prayer ἐκ προσώπου τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος προσφερομένην, which in this context has to mean 'offered in the person of humanity', not 'of his, the Saviour's, humanity'. This appears clearly in the exposition of verse 3, Ἐνεπάγην εἰς ὕλην βυθοῦ, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὑπόστασις. Eusebius attributes these words directly to Christ, recalling the parallel of Jonah (2:6-7, cf. Mt. 12:40) and referring them to Christ's descent into hell. Athanasius here takes a different line, since the phrase εἰς ὕλην βυθοῦ suggests a relapse into sin (any commerce with ὕλη being regarded as sinful!); his comment therefore is Ταῦτα γὰρ ἡ ἀνθρωπεία φύσις ἐπεπόνθει, κατενεχθεῖσα ὑπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας εἰς θάνατον etc. In other words, David represents the Saviour as uttering words appropriate, not to him personally, but to the human race to which, as man, he belonged.

At 68:2, however, this caution clearly does not apply: *Σῶσόν με, ὁ Θεὸς, ὅτι εἰσήλθοσαν ὕδατα ἕως ψυχῆς μου*. Ἐπειδὴ τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν ἀνέλαβε, περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται· εἰκότως καὶ προσεύχεται ῥυσθῆναι ἐκ τῶν πειρασμῶν, χειμάῤῥου δίκην κυκλωσάντων αὐτοῦ τὴν ψυχήν. Syriac: Because he took our sins upon himself and for our sake was sad (Is. 53:4), fittingly also he prays to be saved from the trials that surrounded his soul like a torrent (*op. cit.* p. 109).

Here there is no attempt to evade the suggestion of a soul in Christ; and ψυχή is interpreted, not in the sense of physical life, but of personal consciousness, as assailed by temptation. Athanasius must surely be influenced here by Eusebius, who introduces the word χειμάῤῥους, from Ps. 123:4, as a symbol of temptation, and gives a catena of passages

referring to the soul of Christ (John 10:18, 10:15, 12:27, Mt. 26:38). We shall return later to this theme of the Saviour's temptation and grief for our sins, with the use of Is. 53:4 (οὗτος τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν φέρει καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται), which recurs at Ps. 87:4.

The next occurrence of ψυχή is at verse 11; but Athanasius' comments are better understood if v. 10 is also quoted: *Ὅτι ὁ ζῆλος τοῦ οἴκου σου κατέφαγέ με*. Ἠρνήσαντό με, φησὶν, ἐπειδὴ ἤλεγχον ἀσεβεῖς αὐτοὺς γενομένους περὶ τὸν οἶκον τὸν σόν. Διηγεῖται δὲ τὴν ἱστορίαν σαφῶς ὁ Ἰωάννης (ref. to John 2:13-17). (Comment on v. 10 b omitted). *Καὶ συνεκάλυψα ἐν νηστείᾳ τὴν ψυχήν μου*. Ἀλγῶν, φησὶ, διὰ τὴν ἐσομένην αὐτῶν ἀπώλειαν τῶν ψυχῶν, τὸ καὶ τὸ ἐποιοῦν. Οἱ δὲ ὑπὲρ ὧν ταῦτα ἔδρων, ἐν πάντι καιρῷ καὶ τόπῳ ἐπὶ στόματος ἐμὲ ἔφερον, ἃς ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐποιούμην κακοπαθείας ὀνειδίζοντές με. Syriac: For the zeal of your house has consumed me. They denied me because I reproved them for being impious in your house. The evangelist tells the story clearly .... (The version gives v. 10 b and comment, and continues the psalm quotation to v. 13): (v. 13) And those who sit at the gate thought of me and those who drink wine hymned me, while I grieved over the destruction that would befall their souls. I did good things; but they in return for my doing such things at all times and in all places were bearing me on their mouths, and mocked the evil things I endured for their sake (*op. cit.* p. 110).

The curious phrase τὸ καὶ τὸ ἐποιοῦν (where the Syriac translator probably read τὸ καλόν) perhaps picks up some previous reference to the Saviour's activities which has not been preserved. How these were represented becomes clear if one compares the phrase ἃς ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν ἐποιούμην κακοπαθείας with Eusebius (PG 23, 740 B-745 C), who relates that Jesus, distressed at the sacrilege in the Temple, put on sackcloth and fasted as the Psalmist foretold, while his enemies mocked him with drunken songs; Christ is represented also as ἀποκλαιόμενος αὐτῶν τὴν ἀπώλειαν, 741 A, cf. 741 C, and 745 AB: Τὰς μὲν γὰρ λοιπὰς τῶν ἀνθρώπων ψυχὰς κατέπιεν ὁ θάνατος ... Ἐπ' ἐμοῦ δὲ μὴ γένοιτο τοῦτο. So far as I can see, neither Athanasius nor Eusebius in this case quite directly take up the reference to the ψυχή of Christ.

At 68:19 Athanasius's surviving comments are laconic in the extreme, and Eusebius appears to afford no light: *Πράσχες τῇ ψυχῇ μου, καὶ λύτρωσαι αὐτήν* ἐκ τοῦ κατασχόντος, δηλονότι τοῦ θανάτου. Syriac: Look on my soul and rescue it—clearly from death that held it (*op. cit.* p. 111).

Perhaps all that can be said is that in this case Athanasius clearly does *not* understand τῇ ψυχῇ μου as a mere periphrasis for 'me myself', i.e. the

Logos; it is something over which death might have power. With τοῦ καταοχόντος, perhaps compare the figurative use of κατέχειν at *DI* 15: Εἰ δὲ καὶ εἰς νεκροὺς ἤδη τούτων ἦν ὁ νοῦς κατασχεθείς. But Athanasius clearly does not mean that the Saviour needs to be rescued from *moral* death.

Last in this series comes 68:21, also with the briefest of comments. *Ὀνειδιομὸν προσεδόκησεν ἡ ψυχή μου*. Ἐντεῦθεν ἡμῖν τὸ πάθος διηγεῖται ὁ σαφῶς καὶ οἱ εὐαγγελισταὶ διηγήσαντο. Syriac: My heart expected opprobrium and misery (quotation continued). Here he tells of the passion, which the evangelist also clearly relates to us (*loc. cit.*).

Since the Passion has been in view throughout, this particular reference to it seems puzzling; unless, of course, this comment is drawn from some other work of Athanasius; but the compressed style is quite typical of this work. Eusebius here reads καρδία for ψυχή (compare the Syriac), but is perhaps helpful when he explains that Symmachus and Aquila provide clearer versions, recording an event rather than expectation; thus Aquila: Ὀνειδισμὸς συνέτριψε τὴν καρδίαν μου

Psalm 87 is regularly taken as a prophecy of the Passion. At verse 4 we have: *Ὅτι ἐπλήσθη κακῶν ἡ ψυχή μου*. Εἰ καὶ αὐτὸς τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν ἐβάστασε καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται, εἰκότως καὶ κακῶν ἐμπέπλησταί φησι.

The Syriac long version fails at this point, but the short version has: For he bore our sins and endured suffering for out sake. And this he indicates by saying (v. 4) My soul is sated with evil (*op. cit.* p. 57).

This verse presents much the same problems as 68:2: How could the embodiment of goodness harbour evils in his soul? Eusebius here offers three possible explanations of κακῶν; either his sufferings, or his enemies' wickedness, or our sins which he took upon himself; and here he quotes Gal. 3:13 (γενόμενος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν κατάρα). Athanasius then accepts the third explanation, except that he quotes, instead of Galatians, Isaiah 53:4; but an allusion to Galatians 3:13 appears soon after, at 87:8.

In his comment, Athanasius has so far avoided the word ψυχή which appears in the text; but this does not seem to indicate a strong disinclination, since his remarks on the next verse, 87:5, while generally similar to those of Eusebius, introduce John 10:18, which Eusebius has not used.

We return then to the problems of Psalm 15:10. Here Montfaucon's text gives only the briefest of comments: *Οὐκ ἐγκαταλείψεις τὴν ψυχήν μου*. Αὐτὸς ὢν ζωὴ καὶ ζωοποιὸς, ἐζωοποιεῖσθαι λέγεται παρὰ τοῦ Πατρὸς δία τὴν οἰκονομίαν. But there is a surprise awaiting us in Vian's new fragments: *Ἔτι δὲ καὶ ἡ σάρξ μου κατασκηνώσει ἐπ' ἐλπίδι* (9c) ὅτι οὐκ

ἐγκαταλείψεις τὴν ψυχήν μου εἰς ᾅδην οὐδὲ δώσεις τὸν ὅοιόν οου ἰδεῖν διαφθοράν. Μέχρι τοῦ *ἰδεῖν διαφθοράν.* καὶ ποία τις ἦν ἡ ἐλπὶς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ ἢ ὅτι ἀναλήψεται τὴν ἀποτεθεῖσαν ψυχήν;

The Syriac longer version is not preserved at this point; but the shorter version confirms the Greek text just quoted: Therefore he also says to him: (v. 9) My flesh will reside in hope. The hope, then, is that his flesh will again assume the soul which was constituted. (v. 10) For his soul was not left of Sheol, nor did his body see the corruption of the grave (*op. cit.* p. 10).

The order is slightly changed, and the phrase 'which was constituted', if correctly translated, suggests a different Greek wording; possibly, however, ἀποτεθεῖσαν was simply mistranslated into Syriac, the translator thinking of ἀποτελεσθεῖσαν. But the general impression given is surprising; so far from the death of Christ being represented as a simple departure of the Logos from his body or flesh—which, it is argued, is Athanasius' normal view—"he seems to be represented as dying like other men, discarding his soul which descends to Hades and will later be 'recovered' by his flesh. It may be added that the previous fragment, No. 12 in Vian's collection, strongly suggests that the Saviour is not simply speaking 'in the person of humanity' and thus expressing the hope that men should feel (which is in any case unlikely in view of τὸν ὅσιόν σου). The two fragments read like a continuous text, and in fr. 12 it is 'God' who speaks, rejoicing over the salvation of the lost, and because the *Father* has been gracious to men. The speaker, then, must be God the Logos, in his own person, as distinct from 'the lost'.

The question naturally suggest itself whether Athanasius was following Eusebius at this point. Unfortunately it is difficult to answer, since Eusebius' comment on Psalm 15 has been lost after verse 8, and not much can be gathered from such other scattered references as I have traced (*Comm. in Ps.* PG 23, 106 C, on 4:4, 744 D, on 68:14, 1056 C, on 87:6; *Dem. Ev.* 3 2.70, GCS p. 107 14; *Quaest. et Sol.* 5.1). I can only give the general verdict that Eusebius is noticeably more inclined to speak of the soul of Christ than Athanasius. Thus at 1056 B he gives a christological interpretation of Ps. 29:4 (Κύριε, ἀνήγαγες ἐξ ᾅδου τὴν ψυχήν μου), though when commenting ad loc., 260 A, he agrees with Athanasius in assigning the verse to David. But our examination has, I think, shown that the new text of comment on Ps. 15:10 does not stand entirely alone

What deductions are to be drawn from these findings? In the first place, the poor textual transmission makes it precarious to build too much on isolated passages; and it has to be admitted that Vian's fragment 13 is the only text in which Athanasius' comment couples together the Saviour's flesh with his 'soul'. On the other hand, *any* reference to John 10:11-18—and we have seen that there are two or three besides the veiled one in this passage,—if pursued with any attention, is enough to exclude the notion that the ψυχή of the Saviour simply *is* the Logos seen in a certain context, rather as the owner of a ship may, in a certain context, also be its captain. In the Johannine text, on the other hand, ψυχή can be rendered 'life'—the power or principle of life rather than some separable component of the living being; but it is not easy to give it this sense in the fragment on 15:10; a capacity might be 'recovered', but could hardly go to, or be left in—or *not* be left in—the underworld.

Athanasius' other allusions to a ψυχή in Christ are rather less clear-cut. In some cases ἡ ψυχή could be little more than a periphrasis—'myself'; so perhaps at 21:21, 21:30, possibly at 34:17, 68:19 and 68:21. This leaves five passages of somewhat greater significance, where the ψυχή is associated with (frustrated) spiritual influence (34:11), with temptation (54:17 and 18, 68:2) and with spiritual exercizes (68:11).

It appears, then, that Athanasius does occasionally speak of a ψυχή in Christ; though only in direct exposition of scriptural passages, and much less frequently than Eusebius, whom he often follows. This has not prevented some scholars from interpreting Eusebius' limited use of the term as evidence that 'he denied Christ a soul' while making strenuous efforts, with much less evidence, to defend Athanasius. Both men, no doubt, felt that such language was open to misunderstanding; neither can have had much sympathy for the bold development given it by Origen, who by bringing in a created soul which attaches itself to the Logos by an act of will appears to suggest a doctrine of two Christs. In general, it remains true that Athanasius sees the Word as the true subject of the acts and experiences of Christ, except where these are clearly subject to human limitations and so are assigned to his 'flesh'; and even then it is the Word himself who adopts them, as proper to the flesh which He has assumed. In this perspective, to bring in a human soul would seem tantamount to introducing a second principle of action.

Nevertheless, Athanasius does not consistently eliminate, or explain away, the scriptural texts which speak of a ψυχή in Christ. Occasionally

he can use such texts, interpreting ψυχή not simply as a physical principle in the narrow sense, as a basis of natural life, but also as the locus of feeling, teaching, and spiritual effort. He can hardly be said to exploit such language to interpret the work of our salvation; for instance, he does not depict the divine Word as accepting, assimilating and purifying a human soul in the same way as He accepts and purifies human flesh. Nevertheless soteriological content is not entirely lacking, if we attach full significance to the comment on Ps. 68:2, with its description of the Lord's temptation and the use of Is. 53:4, which recurs at Ps. 87:4, for his temptation and grief are part of the vicarious sufferings which he undergoes for our sake.

But we need to relate these findings to our general estimate of Athanasius' thought, particularly in the context of the theological developments of his lifetime. It would of course be most fortunate for the traditionalist case if we could prove that the *Expositiones* were among his later works, perhaps even reflecting some lessons learnt at Alexandria in 362. But in my judgement this cannot be done; there is good evidence for dating the work much earlier in Athanasius' career. In an impressive paper M.-J. Rondeau has discussed the influence of Eusebius' *Commentary on the Psalms* upon Athanasius and devotes a page or two to discussing the question of dates.[15] Although the two works often diverge, there are a great many passages in which the agreement in thought and phrasing is extremely close; sufficient, in fact, to exclude any theory of mere common dependence on a third source; and if one of these writers drew upon the other, it is abundantly clear that it is not Eusebius who expands Athanasius, but Athanasius who abbreviates Eusebius.

As to the dating, the position is complicated by the fact that Eusebius' work is said to have circulated in two editions; but it has generally been dated in the years 330-337.[16] However, there are references to the desolation of the holy places of Palestine which suggest a date prior to Constantine's restorations; and in the end Mlle. Rondeau leaves the question open, apart from requiring a date 'after the peace of the Church'. As to Athanasius' *Expositiones*, she gives reasons for thinking that this work belongs to the same period as the *Contra Gentes* and the *De Incarnatione*, which, however, she is prepared to assign to the 330's. The reasons are (1) the use of terms formed from φαίνω to denote the Incarnation (ἐπιφάνεια, θεοφάνεια, ἐμφαίνειν); thus ἐπιφάνεια so used occurs ten times in the *DI* and nowhere else; (2) the use of γέννησις to denote the

Saviour's *earthly* birth (reading 68 A 13 at her p. 423 l. 17), found elsewhere only at *DI* 33, p. 153 A; (3) the use of ἐνανθρώπησις, which occurs eight times in *DI*, three times in the first Oration, twice in the Second and once in the *Tomus ad Antiochenos*, and so 'with decreasing frequency'.

I think these arguments can be supplemented and confirmed. As to Eusebius, Mlle. Rondeau is disinclined to accept arguments based on a comparison of style and thought with the *c. Marcellum* and *Ecclesiastical Theology* of 336-7 (though in fact these were designed to prove a *similar* date for the *Commentaria*); such a comparison between an exegetical and a polemical work, she argues, 'ne parait pas de nature à fonder une chronologie relative'.[17] Nevertheless I see some significance in the fact that Eusebius in the *Commentaria* refers quite freely to a ψυχή in Christ, and that he does so also in the *Eclogae Propheticae* and the *Demonstratio Evangelica*, as de Riedmatten has pointed out;[18] but not in the works directed against Marcellus; nor in the *Laus Constantini*, nor the *Theophaneia*, as he observes; and therefore in none of his later works. And when de Riedmatten remarks, most pertinently, that Eusebius never refers to a soul in Christ except in connection with some passage of Scripture, this surely should not mean that such references are to be discounted as merely inadvertent or irrelevant. I would be inclined, therefore, to make the *Commentaria* roughly contemporary with the *Demonstratio*, commonly dated c. 318-20, or possibly antedating it, and attribute to Eusebius a definite change of mind. This could well have sprung from a hostile reaction to Eustathius' work *On the Soul of Christ*, presumably to be dated some time in the 320's; since we know that the two writers were in conflict soon after Nicaea.[19]

As regards Athanasius, I would accept Mlle. Rondeau's arguments for an early date, and extend them as follows:

(1) Both Eusebius and Athanasius use the rather Platonic-sounding terms ἀναβιῶναι, ἀναβίωσις for Christ's resurrection, noted by Mlle. Rondeau on p. 429; and for Athanasius her list can be slightly amplified, as follows: *PG* 27, 84 B; add 105 B (of the saints); 280 D 8 *sec. ms.*; 300 C 14; 320 D 11; 388 D 9; add 420 B 6 (of the human race). As she notes, Athanasius does not use these terms in his other works. However the related word ἀνέζησε occurs once, and that in *DI* 31, p. 149 D 6.

(2) In the *Expositiones* Athanasius makes use of Is. 53:4, often quoted by Eusebius.[20] The clause περὶ ἡμῶν ὀδυνᾶται stands at 305 C 4-5 and 380 B 7-8 (on Ps 68:2, 87:4), and the general theme of the Saviour's grief for our sins is found at 133 C 6-8, 172 B 2-4 and 15, 308 D 5-6, 381 A 5-8 and 460 A 1-2. So far as I can discover, this theme wholly disappears in Athanasius' other works, apart from one brief reference at *Ep. Fest.* 20.1; he does indeed quote Is. 53:3-8 in *DI* 34, but his only comment here refers to the Saviour's dishonour, not to his grief; and a partial quotation of v. 4 in *c. Ar.* 3.31 (missed by Müller) omits the clause in question.

(3) In his *Expositiones* Athanasius, like Eusebius, makes positive and unforced use of Phil. 2:8, especially the phrase ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου; see 104 B 10, 137 A 11-13, 260 C 11, 308 A 10-11, 384 A 4-5 and 464 C 1-2. In his other writings this important verse is only cited in order to refute Arian interpretations of it.

(4) As already noted, Athanasius follows Eusebius in speaking of the Lord as encountering temptation. This theme seems to be lacking in the other works, which ignore the forty days in the wilderness and do not represent the Passion as a πειρασμός. The Lord's victory over the demons is always seen as completed.

Moreover there is the general consideration that in the *Expositiones* Athanasius imitates and adapts Eusebius' work far more extensively than he does in the *DI*, where there are demonstrable borrowings from the *Demonstratio Evangelica* in c. 17 besides the possible or supposed use of the *Theophaneia*. I cannot think it likely that Athanasius would have published a work whose debt to Eusebius was unmistakeable after the latter had publicly declared his support for Arius. This suggests that the *Expositiones* were published at the latest c. 320, and may well be earlier than the *CG* and *DI*; thus I am inclined to think they reflect the impression made upon Athanasius by Eusebius when the latter visited Alexandria c. 311 A.D.[21] Athanasius would then have been about 15, Eusebius about 50, with an established and growing reputation as a scholar and teacher. Moreover Eusebius apparently suffered imprisonment for his faith; and though Potammon was later to complain that he had got off too lightly,[22] it does not at all follow that Athanasius would have seen the matter in the same light; Eusebius had at least put himself at risk, and possibly owed his release merely to an avoidance of deliberate provocation; it is clear that his reputation was not generally impaired. In terms of this relation we can explain the very large measure

of agreement in vocabulary and thought about the Passion of Christ, which I have not been able to explore in detail.

By the time he came to write against Marcellus, Eusebius' christological ideas had perceptibly changed. It now seemed to him that any recognition of a human ψυχή in Christ was bound up with a theology that he had come to distrust, a revival of the heresy of Paul of Samosata (as he conceived it) which denied the substantial reality of the Logos and his substantial union with the flesh of Christ. By this time, we have argued, it was hardly possible that Athanasius should have openly paraded a debt to Eusebius; moreover his theology had matured and developed resources of its own. But it is perfectly possible that he followed a similar course to the extent of realizing that insistence on the Saviour's ψυχή, even in the tentative, scriptural manner of his early commentary, could be interpreted as a gesture of sympathy towards a theology which—despite his personal regard for Marcellus—he was bound to distrust, and for much the same reasons. In his treatment of Christ's Passion he was led to develope this position in a manner which Eusebius never envisaged, attributing the human passions to 'the flesh', with which the divine Word was directly in contact. It may still be possible to defend this theology as a prudent and realistic accomodation to the exigencies of his time.

NOTES

[1] See A. Grillmeier, S. J., *Christ in Christian Tradition*[2] p. 324 n. 84 = [1]p. 214 n. 1.

[2] Cf. I. A. Dorner, *Die Lehre von der Person Christi*, Stuttgart, 1845-56, vol. 1 p. 847 = *History of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, Edinburgh, 1862, 1.2 p. 259; G. Voisin, 'La doctrine christologique de S. Athanase', *RHE* 1 (1900) 230-1, 247; P. Galtier, 'S. Athanase et l'âme humaine du Christ', *Greg.* 36 (1955) 582-3; I. Ortiz de Urbina, 'L'anima umana di Christo secundo S. Atanasio, *OCP* 20 (1954) p. 43.

[3] M. Richard, 'Saint Athanase et la psychologie du Christ selon les Ariens', *MSR* 4 (1947) 5-54. For Eustathius see fr. 15 Spanneut = Theodoret *Eranistes* ed. G. H. Ettlinger p. 231.11 = PG 83, 285.

[4] A. Grillmeier, 'Der Gottessohn im Totenreich', *ZKTh* 71 (1949) 1-53, 184-293; summarized *op. cit.* pp. 315-17 (203-5).

[5] *Op. cit.* 310, 321-2, 325-6 (196, 210-11, 215-17).

[6] I am indebted to Dr. Alvyn Pettersen of Cambridge for a careful survey of recent research, though to save space I have given here only a condensed account.

[7] H. de Riedmatten, *Les actes du procès de Paul de Samosate*, pp. 68-81, esp. 78; cf. Grillmeier *op. cit.*, first edn., pp. 180-1, 195. The treatment of Eusebius in the second edition is much expanded and revised; but see e.g. p. 178, 'Eusebius cannot use any human soul in his Christ', which seems accurate.

[8] S. *Athanase, Lettres festales et pastorales en copte*, ed. L.-Th. Lefort, CSCO 150-1 = *Scr. Coptici* 19-20 (text and translation)

[9] *Op. cit.* pp. 35-7

[10] It should of course be remembered that our habit of rendering ψυχή by 'soul' imposes a rather precise sense and makes the transition seem more abrupt than it would to a Greek, for whom the word has a range of senses roughly corresponding to 'life', 'soul', 'consciousness' and 'self'

[11] *Testi inediti dal Commento ai Salmi di Atanasio* (*Studia Ephemeridis "Augustinianum"* 14), Rome, 1978

[12] *Athanasiana Syriaca*, ed. R. W. Thomson, Part IV: CSCO 386-7 = *Scr. Syri* 167-8 (text and translation) In the longer version, the following psalms are preserved complete, or nearly so: 23-4, 70-2, 76, 79, 100-104, 106-8, 111-16, 149, 150, with a large portion of 68 and remains of numerous others.

[13] Cf. n. 4 above.

[14] See e.g. 305 A, 308 BC, 724 D-725 C, 1053 D-1056 C, 1065 D-1068 A.

[15] 'Une nouvelle preuve de l'influence litteraire d'Eusèbe de Césarée sur Athanase: l'interpretation des psaumes', *Rech. Sc. Rel.* 56 (1968) 385-434

[16] Rondeau, *op. cit.* p. 421 n. 64, and p. 420 n. 60.

[17] *Op. cit.* p. 422

[18] *Les actes du procès de Paul de Samosate* (*Paradosis* 6) p. 78 n. 75.

[19] Socrates, *H.E.* 1.23; Sozomen, *H.E.* 2.18

[20] See PG 23, 308 B, 736 A, 756 D, 1060 B, 1065 A, 1068 A

[21] Cf. F. L. Cross, *The Study of St. Athanasius*, Oxford, 1945, p. 15

[22] Epiphanius, *Haer.* 68.8.

XIII

ST. ATHANASIUS ON THE PSALMS

Not many months ago I wrote for this journal, attempting to examine the evidence for St. Athanasius' teaching on the soul of Christ provided by the *Expositiones in Psalmos*,[1] a relatively neglected work which has recently been made available for study by the labours of Dr. G. M. Vian.[2] I should have realized at the time that Dr. Gilles Dorival had recently published a paper[3] which raises serious doubts as to the authenticity of this piece. There is no need to question its overall unity, which Dr. Vian has maintained; but if Dr. Dorival is right in his assessment of the complex textual tradition provided by the Catenae, the author has borrowed material not only from Eusebius of Caesarea (as noted some years ago by Mme. M.-J. Rondeau[4]) but also from Origen, Apollinaris, Didymus, and even Cyril of Alexandria. This author therefore cannot possibly be Athanasius, and Dr. Dorival thinks of an Alexandrian writer at work somewhere between 440 and 500 A.D.

Further pursuit of this question would involve detailed study of the manuscripts and of the whole Catena tradition, which at present I have no opportunity to undertake. But Dr. Dorival's paper has prompted me to take a second look at the work, and I think it may be worth while to set down some impressions of its style and method, comparing it in particular with the one Athanasian writing specifically devoted to the Psalms whose authenticity cannot be doubted, the *Epistula ad Marcellinum*. In any case I should promptly acknowledge the question-mark which must now be attached to my earlier paper.

The *Epistula ad Marcellinum* is usually considered to be a work of Athanasius' maturity. Its attestation is unusually good, since apart from numerous Athanasian manuscripts it is transmitted by the Codex Alexandrinus of the Bible, which dates from the beginning of the fifth century, and so from not much more than fifty years after the probable date of writing. No modern critical text is available, but the text printed in Migne may be taken as generally reliable. The work has been considered in an excellent study published by Mme. Rondeau in 1968,[5] and

there is also a good description and analysis by H. J. Sieben.[6] I will offer my own brief analysis, which is not based on Sieben's work and which I hope does not too obviously duplicate it, as a basis for the argument that follows.

The work divides into 33 chapters; but it will be convenient to group these into six main sections.

Section I, Chapter 1, is an address to Marcellinus, praising him for his conduct during the present persecution, in which he suffered greatly, and his study of the Scriptures after a recent illness, or conceivably a general epidemic. Athanasius undertakes to repeat a discourse on the Psalter, which he says he heard from a φιλόπονος γέρων.

Section II, Chapters 2-13, considers the unique advantages of the Psalter. Athanasius first shows, in cc. 2-8, how the Psalter recapitulates all the main books of the Bible; an important passage to which I shall return. In c. 9 he says that conversely the Psalter is echoed in all the other books; there is one Spirit in all. Cc. 10-12 explain that the Psalter has the special distinction that each man finds it expresses the emotions (κινήματα) of his own soul. Thus it not only enjoins, but invites and expresses, repentance, endurance and thanksgiving, so that each man adopts its language as his own. In c. 13 Athanasius returns to the theme already handled in cc. 7-8, namely that the Saviour's incarnation is already foreshadowed in the Psalms. This chapter is of interest in that it introduces our Lord's moral example as well as his teaching, a facet of his saving work which is not much emphasized in Athanasius' dogmatic writings, though there are parallels to be found in the Festal Letters.

Section III, Chapter 14, begins by representing the Psalter as a guide to the moral and spiritual life; but this leads almost at once into a classification of the psalms by their literary type and subject-matter. The list begins by noting thirteen psalms composed ἐν διηγήματι, in narrative form. Perhaps it is characteristic of Athanasius that the chapter is not really systematic, either in the classification adopted or in the way it is carried out. Thus the narrative psalms include No. 106 by the LXX numeration (which I shall adopt from now on); but one looks in vain for the two preceding psalms, which we should probably reckon as narrative psalms *par excellence*; these two come up soon after, together with 106, as examples of ἐξομολόγησις, to be understood as "thanksgiving'; and shortly afterwards 105 and 106, but not 104, appear in a list of psalms which combine narrative with thanksgiving. Thus the headings overlap, and are not consistently applied. Several psalms are

treated twice; indeed Nos. 9 and 106 appear three times; on the other hand nineteen psalms are not mentioned at all, including the very surprising omissions of Nos. 23 and 50.

Section IV, Chapters 15-26, is a long section on what might be called the devotional use of the Psalter. The basic plan adopted here is very simple; Athanasius merely goes through the psalms in order, sometimes adding a few psalms of a similar character to the one he has reached, occasionally taking one or more out of turn, and fairly often omitting one or more. If I have counted right, no less than ninety-five psalms appear in the main sequence, though admittedly the fifteen 'psalms of ascents' are taken as a group. But twenty-five are passed over entirely, if the printed text is reliable. These are mostly different from the nineteen omitted in c. 14; but two, Nos. 86 and 135, escape notice altogether. Not surprisingly, the wisdom and devotional value of this section are not matched by any literary elegance or even efficiency, since the reader is kept jumping from subject to subject. However in c. 26 Athanasius concludes by grouping together the psalms which prophesy the Lord's Incarnation; this covers much the same ground as cc. 6-8 already described, but the treatment is briefer, since only the numbers of the psalms are indicated, whereas the earlier section quotes the significant verses. In eight cases this chapter fills in gaps which have been left in the previous series; but the remaining four psalms have already been mentioned, so that once again there is little evidence of careful design.

Since I shall not discuss this section in detail, I will give a brief specimen from c. 20: 'But you have sinned, and in your shame you repent and call for mercy: you have the words of confession and repentance in No. 50. But if you were slanderously accused before a wicked king, and see the slanderer triumphing, then retire and yourself say No. 51. But when you are persecuted and people slander you, wishing to betray you, as the Ziphites and the Philistines did to David, do not despond, but trust in the Lord and say 53 and 55'. It would be tempting, no doubt, to take the 'wicked king' as a reference to Constantius, or less probably Julian, which might help to fix a date for the Epistle; but the context shows that Athanasius is thinking of Saul. Many of the psalms, however, are treated as conveying general moral lessons, or as advising the contemporary Church; so clearly Ps. 75, which is made to refer to Greeks and heretics; and some others are recommended for use on particular days of the Christian week; but a reference back to David is made also for Pss. 7, 143 and 144.

Section V, Chapters 27-29, discusses the reasons for the verse and melody of the Psalter. Some simple-minded Christians believe that it is intended to make a sweet sound and delight the hearing. But that is untrue; the Scriptures are not meant to give pleasure. There are in fact two reasons. First, it was proper that God's praises should be set forth in Scripture not only in prose but in verse, so that men might love the Lord with all their strength and ability, δυνάμεως. Secondly, the different κινήματα in men's soul need to be brought into harmony. I quote: 'Since various motions appear in the soul, and it contains both reason (τὸ λογίζεσθαι) and desire (τὸ ἐπιθυμεῖν) and impulse (τὸ θυμόειδες), and it is from their motion that the physical activity of the body is also conducted, so reason (or 'the Logos') requires that a man should not be discordant with himself, so as to reason admirably but act badly on impulse'—like Pilate, or the eiders who plotted against Susanna, or the wavering believers mentioned by St. James. So far as I am aware, this piece of Platonic psychology occurs nowhere else in Athanasius; though one doubts if it is very carefully applied, since he attributes Pilate's failure to his θυμός, whereas an authentic Platonist would presumably say that it was precisely the *lack* of θυμός, the lack of courage and self-respect, which allowed him to disobey his reason and conscience. But perhaps this marks a difference between Plato and the Neoplatonists of Athanasius' time.

The section continues by claiming that the melody of the Psalter is a symbol of the concord which should rule in our souls, controlling our passions and directing our bodily movements. There is a word of reproof for irresponsible musicians, who perform for pleasure, and an example drawn from David, who pleased God by his music—the word used is καταψάλλων—as well as expelling Saul's confusion and madness. Despite David's example, it does not seem that Athanasius approves the use of musical instruments: 'Praising God', he writes, 'on resounding cymbals and on the harp and the ten-stringed lute was thus a symbol'—σύμβολον πάλιν ἦν—'and an indication of the members of the body being duly co-ordinated like strings and the thoughts of the soul becoming like cymbals, all conducted by the voice and command of the Spirit, so that the imagination is quickened by the vision of future goods' Athanasius' exegesis here is, we may say, typological; he does not doubt that the sacred book describes real historical events, which however convey symbolic instructions; the phrase he uses contrasts with the immediately preceding sentence describing the present practice

which he approves: 'Reading to a chant *is* a symbol of the rhythmical and tranquil condition of the mind' (καὶ ἡ ἐμμελὴς δὲ ἀνάγνωοις σύμβολόν ἐστι τῆς εὐρύθμου καὶ ἀχειμάστου καταστάσεως τῆς διανοίας).

The concluding *Section VI, Chapters 30-33*, begins with a recapitulation on the manifold usefulness of the Psalter; this leads, in c. 31, to a warning against trying to improve its wording. But, one asks, who would wish to do this? Could it be a veiled reference to the activities of Apollinaris and his father in the time of Julian? There is a slight suggestion pointing this way in c. 32: 'If a man is oppressed when he says these words, he will see the great consolation that is in them; or if he is tempted and persecuted when he sings the psalms thus, he will appear the more approved and be protected by the Lord'. It is not impossible, I think, to take this as meaning that a man might be persecuted *because* he says the actual words of the Psalter, and could have escaped by using a paraphrase But have we any evidence for paraphrases written with this intention? Apollinaris' paraphrases were intended as a substitute fot the classics of pagan literature, not as a replacement of the biblical books And in the final chapter Athanasius' elderly mentor is recalled as giving a rather different warning against revisers of the sacred text. 'He used to say that those men deserved every sort of condemnation who abandoned these (words) and composed for themselves attractive phrases from other sources and thereby called themselves exorcists.' In the authentic words of the Psalter the Lord is present; and those who care for sufferers are to say these words and no other; they will thus both benefit the sufferers and gain God's approval for their faith and his help for those who need it.

Let us now turn to the other professedly Athanasian work, the *Expositiones in Psalmos*. This has not come down to us in a direct tradition; it is known only through the *catenae*. Montfaucon's edition of 1698 was based on four Paris manuscripts; some other fragments published later by Montfaucon, and others again edited by Barbaro and Cordier have been incorporated into the text printed by Migne. It has long been realized that this text is unreliable; it omits some fragments that have since been found, but, more serious, it attributes to Athanasius a large number of comments which are known to have come from other writers. In recent years a much better criterion for reconstructing the text has been discovered, namely the MS. *Vaticanus Graecus* 754. This MS. clearly presents a combination of two older sources; but these can still be distinguished because their series of

fragments are numbered on two different systems. One series, numbered in minuscule letters with a fresh start for each psalm, has been shown to derive from Evagrius; the other, numbered in uncial letters and running on from psalm to psalm to begin again after each complete hundred, claims to come from Athanasius.

The information collected from this Vatican MS has enabled scholars to identify other witnesses to the same Athanasian source. There are also some fragments preserved in Coptic, and two Syriac versions, an abbreviated version preserved complete, and a longer version of which only about 15% survives. The Greek text itself consists of fairly brief scholia, and might itself be derived from a still longer work, for we have no reason to think that all the missing fragments have now been recovered; but this, if it ever existed, is now completely lost; the longer Syriac version corresponds with the extant Greek text

Using all this evidence, Dr. G. M. Vian has been able to produce, not indeed an edition, which is still awaited, but a handbook to the *Expositiones* entitled *Testi Inediti dal Commento ai Salmi di Atanasio*, Rome, 1978. This book prints 158 new fragments, followed by an elenchus showing which passages are to be discarded from the Migne edition. In the great majority of cases Dt. Vian is able to indicate the name of their author; and quite a large proportion turn out to have been already printed elsewhere in Migne; for instance those by Evagrius printed under the name of Origen in Vol. 12, and those by Theodore of Mopsuestia to be found in Vol. 80. The scholar equipped with Vian's work, with photostats of the Migne text, and with a serviceable blue pencil, can now at last make a sound beginning in his study of the *Expositiones*.

Let us try to give a general impression of the work. Each psalm is given a prologue, called *hypothesis*, which briefly explains its theme, generally following the Septuagint title fairly closely. The writer then quotes the psalm clause by clause, often giving a separate comment for each. Many of these comments are telegrammatic in the extreme; as a specimen I will take the 50th psalm, where the LXX title runs: 'For the end. A psalm of a song by David. When Nathan the prophet came to him, when he went in to Bathsheba.' The commentator's *hypothesis* runs as follows: 'He sings this psalm which contains the confession of two crimes, the murder of Uriah and the adultery with Bathsheba. He also introduces a prophecy of the general redemption of sins that is to come about through holy baptism, and instruction about worship in the spirit. But everywhere you will find him deprecating his two offences'.

There follows the commentary. 'Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy great goodness.' He begs to gain the great mercy of God, seeing it is for a great offence. 'And according to the multitude of thy mercies blot out my offence.' For only the mercies of God can cleanse the murderous hands. 'Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity:' he means that of the murder. 'And cleanse me from my sin.' That is the adultery. 'For I acknowledge my iniquity:' this again refers to the murder. 'And my sin is ever before me.' Over and over he turns the recollection of the sin committed in his adultery.

This is not quite the Athanasius we know; it gives the impression of a tidy-minded and rather prosaic writer. It is perhaps unfair to judge him from such brief comments (which however can hardly be the epitome of a longer treatment); but when he writes at greater length, the results are not always enlivening. Here is a specimen from the previous psalm, 49:21: 'Thou thoughtest wickedly that I shall be like thee.' For a long time, he says, I have been patient, but I will be so no longer; for I will produce your sins to reprove you, sins which you thought were no longer in existence and would not be remembered by anyone. But I, as being God, will bring them to light and they shall be exhibited before you; not concealing them as you do, and becoming like yourself. But I will produce them, so that by revealing them I will pour shame upon you.' This could have been put more briefly and effectively, one feels; the Psalmist tells us that God spoke once; the commentator makes him repeat himself six times over.

Further study will disclose a fascinating profile, which certainly has some features which are characteristic of Athanasius. For instance, the writer is clearly committed to the monastic ideal, and his spirituality has some fairly close parallels with the *Vita Antonii*. But this is not a safe ctiterion; the *Vita* soon became popular, and any writer with monastic sympathies a generation or more later than Athanasius could well have been influenced by it. (The same probably goes for the *de Incarnatione*, and might explain some resemblances noted by Mme. Rondeau[7]). At other times I seem to detect a writer of rather limited mentality, who takes some genuinely Athanasian themes and works them to death; for example, the Psalter's rich variety of imagery drawn from Israel's history, the natural and created world, and the arts of music and dance is reduced by a relentlessly stereotypic exegesis to a few endlessly repeated lessons on the spiritual combat and on life in the Church. But such impressions can only be subjective. A better criterion, I think, is to

take the *Epistula ad Marcellinum*, which is undoubtedly genuine, and consider the interpretation of texts from the psalms given in cc. 6-8, and in other contexts where available, for comparison with the interpretations given in the *Expositiones*.

Athanasius, we have seen, explains that the Psalter recapitulates the whole Bible. The creation is praised in Psalm 18:2, 'The heavens declare', and in 23:1, 'The earth is the Lord's'. The exodus appears at 113:1-2, *In exitu Israel*, and 104:26-31, 'He sent Moses his servant'; while 28:1, 'Bring young rams unto the Lord', recalls the worship at the tabernacle. Judges inspires two texts from Ps. 106, namely vv. 36-7, 'They planted cities', and v. 6, 'Then they cried unto the Lord'. (Here we should note that Athanasius is not always consistent in his exegesis, since we later find verse 20 of the same psalm taken out of its context in Israel's history: 'He sent his Word and healed them' is referred to the Incarnation; so also *de Inc.* 40, *c. Ar.* ii.32 and *Ser.* ii.8 (though the last-named is a paraphrase giving a more general, cosmological sense). No doubt this was a traditional testimonium.[8] The Book of Kings is reflected in Ps. 19:8, 'Some put their trust in chariots and some in horses'; and Esdras in two Psalms of Ascents, Nos 125 and 121. Thus far on the Old Testament.

How are these verses treated in the *Expositiones*? On the first text, 'The heavens declare', there is fairly close agreement; though the *Expositiones* characteristically represent this as introductory teaching given by the Apostles to the people, warning them not to worship the heavenly bodies. This latter point has a good Athanasian parallel at *c. Gent.* 27. But at Ps. 23:1, 'The earth is the Lord's', the writer of the *Expositiones* takes a line of his own. The hypothesis states, quite reasonably, that the psalm is concerned with the Lord's ascension and the teaching of the Gentiles. But verse 1 is referred, not to the creation, but to the sovereignty of the only-begotten Word over the Gentiles in consequence of his Incarnation; reference to the creation only appears at v. 2, where it is presented in opposition to the opinion of 'enemies', possibly Marcionites, who supposed that the earth originally belonged to Satan.

Coming to the Exodus passages, Ps. 113, *In exitu Israel*, is treated in the *Expositiones* not as historical but as prophetic; it again refers to the calling of the Gentiles. Here perhaps a clue can be found in Eusebius, if the printed text is sound; Eusebius (1353 B) suggests that either interpretation is possible; Athanasius opts for history, the *Expositiones* for

prophecy. On Ps. 104:26 ff., 'He sent Moses', there is no disagreement; but for Ps. 28:1 the interpretation given by the Expositiones is quite different and surprising: 'Bring unto the Lord, ye sons of God'. 'Sons of God' refers to the holy Apostles, for he taught them to say 'Our Father'.... 'Bring unto the Lord the sons of rams'. 'Sons of rams' means those who were called by them out of the Jewish nation to faith in the Lord.—Eusebius also refers this verse to the Apostles, but takes the sons of rams to be converts from paganism, so designated because of their lack of reason.

Psalm 106 is taken by Athanasius in a historical sense, as we saw, with an exception at verse 20. The *Expositiones* agrees where verse 6 is concerned—see Vian's new fragment 55; but much of the psalm is taken in a generalized and spiritualized sense; though at verse 21 we read 'He transfers his account to the Holy Apostles'—who after all did recount the marvellous works of the Lord, and did go down to the sea in ships. But verse 36, on sowing fields and planting vineyards, is taken to mean, quite contrary to Athanasius, that they sowed the word and established the Church. Eusebius also refers to the stilling of the storm, but incorporates verses 36-7 into a criticism of the *spiritual* husbandry of the Jews. One disagreement remains among the Old Testament passages; whereas Athanasius refers the verse about trusting in chariots and horses to the Book of Kings, in the *Expositiones* it is connected with Pharaoh's overthrow at the Red Sea; this exegesis also agrees with Eusebius. This point has clearly little evidential value; and there is no significant disagreement over the Psalms of Ascents. Apart from these, in the eight Old Testament passages actually quoted there is agreement between the *Epistula* and the *Expositiones* in only three cases, the other five being distinctly different; there are complete or partial parallels with Eusebius in four cases out of eight.

Turning to the New Testament, Athanasius cites nine psalm-texts which refer to the Incarnation and the activity of Christ, six which refer to the Passion, and nine which forecast the Ascension, the coming Judgement and the call of the Gentiles. On the deeply traditional Passion texts there is no significant disagreement; but I will discuss one or two interesting divergences in the first and third groups.

Psalm 49:2-3, 'Our God shall come and shall not keep silence', clearly permits two interpretations; Athanasius takes it of the Incarnation, the *Expositiones* of the Second Coming; Eusebius agrees with this in his Commentary, p. 436 A, but elsewhere with Athanasius, e.g. *D.E.* vi.3.

Psalm 44:11, 'Hearken, O daughter, and consider', is taken by Athanasius in the *Epistula* to denote Gabriel's message to the Virgin. If Mme. Rondeau is right,[9] this is an early example of an exegesis which became popular much later; the usual treatment was to make it apply to the Church, as the Bride of Christ; and this is what we find in the *Expositiones* and at least three times in Eusebius (*Comm.* 253 A, 401 C, *D.E.* v.2). But the most interesting case of this group is Psalm 109:3c, 'From the womb before the day-star I have begotten thee'. Athanasius quite regularly refers this to the begetting of the Son by the Father before all creation; indeed in *Decr.* 26 he cites Dionysius of Rome, who connects it with Col. 1:15. But in the *Expositiones* the comment is: 'See how the Father appropriates the *human* birth of the only-begotten': Ὅρα πῶς οἰκειοῦται τὴν κατὰ σάρκα γέννησιν τοῦ Μονογενοῦς. Now this agrees with what Eusebius writes in his Commentary, p. 1344 A, if the text is reliable; but it is also adopted by Marcellus of Ancyra (fr. 26 = 31), and it is *rejected* by Eusebius, not only in his work against Marcellus, but in his *Demonstratio Evangelica* which was written many years previously; see *D.E.* iv.15.53, 16.7, 16.56, v.3.1, 3.7; *c. Marc.* ii.3.30. Does this tell us something about the date of Eusebius' Commentary?

Turning to the post-resurrection group of texts, there is fair agreement in six cases; in one case the *Expositiones* comment has not survived; but this hardly matters, since a second passage in the *Epistula* (c. 26, 37 C) shows that Athanasius is pretty flexible in his interpretation of Psalm 71. However in c. 8 'Give judgement to the King's Son' is taken as foreshadowing the Last Judgement; in the *Expositiones* it refers to the Incarnation and the Passion; Eusebius also relates it to the Incarnation (*Comm.* 789D-792A, and so probably *D.E.* viii.1.52-4, ix.13.10, 17.16); and Athanasius also, *in illud omnia* 2, 213A. Finally, Athanasius sees the Last Judgement prophesied in Psalm 81:1, 'He is a judge among gods'; the *Expositiones* connects this verse with the Incarnation, taking 'gods' as a reference to the Jewish authorities; this again agrees with Eusebius, 984A.

To sum up this discussion: of the ten psalm-texts which Athanasius connects with the Old Testament, there is agreement in five cases with the *Expositiones*, and disagreement in five. Of nine texts on the Incarnation, four agree and three disagree, with no comment on two. Of six texts on the Passion, probably five agree, none disagree, and one lacks comment. Of nine post-Resurrection texts, six agree, two disagree and

one is missing. And where the *Expositiones* disagrees with the Athanasius of the *Epistula*, more often than not it agrees with Eusebius.

Was the writer of the *Expositiones* Athanasius? Quite apart from Dr. Dorival's arguments, which I cannot verify, I have come to think that he was not. There are differences in vocabulary, mostly unremarkable in themselves, like the writer's use of the word τάγματα—five instances at least—and the theologically significant noun κένωσις, both absent from Müller's Lexicon, and the fairly frequent use of κῆρυξ to denote an apostle. More instructive is the writer's use of the words γένεσις/γέννησις and their cognates. Prestige and Rondeau have shown that Athanasius is particular about the use of these words; γέννησις, begetting, is never used of our Lord's human birth, with the single exception of *de Inc.* 33, despite the example of Psalm 86:5, Gal. 4:4, etc.; much more emphatically, γένεσις is not used of his divine Sonship, and the Arians are explicitly condemned for speaking thus. The writer of the *Expositiones* does not share this precision; he uses the word γέννησις at least seven times of the Lord's human birth, and the verb γεννᾶν at least three times.[10] Even more significant, if we can trust the printed text, is the use of γίνομαι for his divine birth at p. 208B 11-12, on Psalm 44:2, γεγένηται γὰρ Θεὸς ἐκ Θεοῦ, an Arianizing phrase which would have astounded Athanasius!

This usage could be explained, after Mme. Rondeau, as characteristic of Athanasius' early writings, though later abandoned by him.[11] But there is one phrase which occurs repeatedly in the *Expositiones* where I think this explanation cannot apply, and which proves that its author is not Athanasius. As is well known, he deals with the Lord's self-imposed limitations in his Incarnation, and especially the expressions of grief and distress during the Passion which were recalled by the christological exegesis of such texts as Psalm 37:9, 'I roared out of the groaning of my heart', 54:4, the δειλία θανάτου, and 68:5, 'Lord thou knowest my foolishness'. Athanasius explains these expressions in two different ways. One is to say that the Lord had taken a human body and human flesh, so that he speaks humanly and suffers the things which naturally belong to the body and the flesh (*c. Ar.* iii.55-8). Another, which he shares with Eusebius, is to appeal to Gal. 3:13, 'Christ has become a curse for us', which explains why Christ should utter words which are really appropriate only to *sinful* humanity. But in the *Expositiones* we find these wholly Athanasian ideas conveyed in a phrase which is never used by the real Athanasius—and so far as I have observed, not by

Eusebius either; Christ is said to speak ἐκ προσώπου τῆς ἀνθρωποτήτος. I have counted nine examples, at Ps. 15:1, 15:9, 21 *Hyp.*, 21:2, 21:11, 40:12, 56:2, 68 *Hyp.*, 69 *Hyp.*, besides 142 *Hyp.* which uses a similar phrase but is not given a christological sense.

What exactly does it mean? Mme. Rondeau noticed it briefly[12] and remarked that it could refer either to humanity as a whole, or to the personal humanity of Christ. In fact the first sense is perfectly clear and explicit in several cases; a typical example comes at Ps. 15:1, 'Preserve me. O Lord, for in thee have I put my trust —Assuming the common *prosōpon*, so to speak, of humanity, he addresses God and the Father; not really on his own account, but for us and on our account, as being one of us through the economy' (Τὸ κοινὸν ὥσπερ πρόσωπον τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος ἀναλαβὼν τοὺς πρὸς Θεὸν καὶ Ηατέρα ποιεῖται λόγους· οὐχ ὑπέρ γε μᾶλλον ἑαυτοῦ, δι' ἡμᾶς δὲ καὶ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ὡς εἷς ἐξ ἡμῶν διὰ τὴν οἰκονομίαν). Again at 40:12, 'that my enemy may not triumph against me', we find a contrast: 'If Christ says this from the *prosōpon* of humanity, the enemy would mean him who devised our death' (sc. the devil); 'but if it comes as from Christ himself, he means the rulers of the Jews' Again in Ps. 68 *Hyp.* the phrase ἐκ προσώπου τῆς ἀνθρωπότητος is paralleled a few lines below by ἐκ προσώπου τῆς ἀνθρώπου φύσεως. Mme. Rondeau's second possibility, a reference to the more sophisticated notion of Christ's own personal humanity, is never quite unambiguously expressed, but it is probably present at 21:11, 'I was cast upon thee from the womb' ... 'He prays again from the person of (his) humanity. For indeed the band of disciples had deserted him.' The writer, then, is clearly aware of two distinct possibilities, but may not have noticed the possible ambiguity of this actual phrase.

If our argument is accepted, what follows? First, it perceptibly changes our picture of Athanasius. It counters the impression given, e.g., by Quasten, who writes (iii.38) 'It is evident that Athanasius had a predilection for the allegorical and typological interpretation of the Psalter in contradistinction to the more jejune exegesis predominant in his dogmatico-polemical writings' Certainly, as we have seen, Athanasius treated some texts from the Psalter as pointing forward to the Incarnation and the Church; but in others he is prepared to recognize a straightforward historical sense, no doubt reflecting the reaction against Origen's allegory which we are told was set on foot by Bishop Peter of Alexandria.

Next, can we attempt to construct a profile of the unknown writer?—assuming, as I think we may, that the *Expositiones* is a unitary work. As already noted, he repeatedly follows Eusebius; but he never follows him in comparing the different versions of the Greek text; he is interested only in the LXX; Dr. Vian's elenchus has now made this clear. Next, he is strongly interested in the ascetic ideal; though I have not noticed any passage which clearly points either to solitary devotion or to community life. Thirdly, he shows no clearly-marked dogmatic interests. He is clearly a Nicene; he once uses the term ὁμοούσιος, at 21:2, and once mentions the Trisagion, at 26:6; but he does not appear to be greatly worried by Arianism, and when he explains that the Lord is superior to the heavenly powers, at 88:7, the passage turns out to be borrowed from Eusebius. He tends to play down the Psalmist's allusions to a soul in Christ, but does not ignore them altogether; this is a position which I formerly thought was once adopted by Athanasius. I can find no clear indication of either monophysite or diphysite sympathies—which seems unexpected if with Dorival we make him an Alexandrian writing in the half-century after Cyril's death. The phrase τὸ πρόσωπον τὴς ἀνθρωπότητος might seem to have an Antiochene flavour; but as we have seen, it does not distinctly refer to a *personal* humanity in Christ, though again it does not exclude it; and it is not matched by any corresponding phrase on the lines of τὸ πρόσωπον τῆς θεότητος.

We seem, then, to have a writer who is strongly committed to the monastic ideal, but is notably uninterested in dogmatic disputes—at least, in those which provoked the major crises of the fourth and fifth centuries. He is clearly well grounded in the traditional exegesis of the Psalter; if Dorival is right, besides Eusebius he uses Origen, Apollinaris, Didymus and Cyril; but he makes his own characteristic selection. Despite his massive debt to Eusebius, he is really not much interested in establishing the original meaning of the text; his concern is to interpret the Psalter in terms which bear on the Church's life; and here an all-pervading emphasis is that on evangelism, including the conversion of Jews as well as Gentiles. Perhaps some scholar better acquainted than I with the post-Athanasian Church can use these clues to throw more light upon his identity.

NOTES

[1] 'The Scriptures and the Soul of Christ in Athanasius', *Vig. Christ.* 36 (1982) 233-250.
[2] See p. 70.
[3] 'Athanase ou Pseudo-Athanase', *RSLR* 16 (1980) 80-89.
[4] 'L'Épître à Marcellinus sur les psaumes', *Vig. Christ.* 22 (1968) 176-197.
[5] See n. 4, and cf. her recent book *Les Commentaires Patristiques du Psautier*, Vol. I (Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 219). Rome 1982.
[6] 'Athanasius über den Psalter', *Theologie und Philosophie* 48 (1973) 157-173.
[7] *Op. cit.*, 189, 192-3.
[8] Cf. Eusebius *H.E.* i.2.8, *D.E.* v.5.1, 7.4.
[9] *Op. cit.*, 180.
[10] γέννησις: 84A, 124A, 384A, 384D, 461B, 461C, 461D. γεννᾶν, 128C, 388C, 461D.
[11] 'Une nouvelle preuve de l'influence littéraire d'Eusèbe de Césarée sur Athanase', *RecSR* 56 (1968) 385-434; esp. 404-409; *Vig. Christ.* 22 (1968) 184-185.
[12] *RecSR op. cit.*, 423.

Why Not Three Gods?

The Logic of Gregory of Nyssa's Trinitarian Doctrine

Gregory of Nyssa's treatise 'On Not Three Gods' is an attractive and influential work, and I make no apology for reflecting on it once again, together with some companion pieces. I have come to think that it resembles an accomplished conjuring trick more nearly than a valid theological demonstration; but I trust that in presenting this view I shall not disconcert our greatly respected colleague and dear friend, who has always combined a dedicated pursuit of total accuracy with great kindness towards less gifted scholars.

Gregory's essay is conveniently accessible in F. Müller's edition, as are two other works which offer useful comparisons, the *Ad Eustathium de sancta trinitate*, and the *Ad Graecos (ex communibus notionibus)*. I shall also refer to 'Basil's' *Letter 38*, assuming it was written by Gregory[1].

These four pieces appear to divide into two groups according to the standpoint adopted. The two latter argue in philosophical style that the confession of three divine hypostases is no bar to the acceptance of the single divine substance, οὐσία, proclaimed in the Nicene Creed; when correctly understood, ὑπόστασις refers to individuals, οὐσία to the common nature they share; and it is taken for granted that the word θεός indicates this divine substance or nature; thus there are three Persons but one God[2]. The other two essays put their case more informally; the *tres dei* presents it thus: if each of the divine Persons is to be called God, why should we proclaim one God rather than three? In these two pieces Gregory is still prepared to discuss the view that the word θεός refers to the divine substance or nature (οὐσία, φύσις), but he prefers to take it as indicating the divine activity of providential oversight, θεωρεῖν; his argument being that God's nature is mysterious, and so cannot be signified by any word, and therefore not by the word θεός[3]. In the *De Trinitate*, more-

[1] *Tres dei*: GNO III/I 37-57; *trin*: *ib.* 3-16; *comm not*: *ib.* 19-33. *Ad Petrum fratrem de differentia essentiae et hypostaseos* = BAS *ep* 38 (I 81-92 COURTONNE).
[2] See e. g. *comm not* (GNO III/I 22,11-24).
[3] *Trin* (GNO III/I 14,5 ff.); *tres dei* (GNO III/I 42,13 ff.).

over, a third possibility is mentioned, though not warmly approved; namely that θεός is simply a term expressive of supreme value[4] Both these works, however, argue the case for divine unity in terms of the attributes, or the operations, which are common to the three Persons; and when they wish to summarize, prefer the less formal term φύοις as against the more technical, and more controversial, οὐσία, ὑπόστα-οις and πρόσωπον. A table showing the frequency of these four nouns will bring out the contrast.

	comm not	*ep 38*	*trin*	*tres dei*
οὐσία	96	19	3	4
ὑπόστασις	35	32	6	11
πρόσωπον	58	3	1	4
φύοις	6	11	30	62

The two former works, I think, were written at a time when the Nicene Creed itself was the focus of intense debate; R. Hübner's suggestion of 379-80, shortly before the Council of Constantinople, seems extremely probable[5] The other two pieces no doubt came later, when it was less easy to present a formal challenge to Nicene theology, hut when Gregory's own orthodoxy might be questioned[6]. His observations on the word θεός might well be a correction of his former view; moreover in *tres dei* (37,8), there is a reference to his old age.

1.

Gregory explains his general standpoint in *trin* pp. 5-7. His critics, he says, complain that while he recognizes three distinct hypostases in the Godhead, he speaks of only one Goodness, Power, and Divinity[7]. It appears from the next page that these critics are pluralists, who themselves confess, not only three hypostases, but three substances (οὐσίαι)[8]; though according to Gregory they treat only the Father and the Son as truly divine[9]. If this is correct, we would call

[4] *Trin* (15,7 ff.)

[5] See R. M. NÜBNER, *Ep* 38, 490.

[6] *Trin* (3,11-7,15); cf. *tres dei* (37,3-10).

[7] *Trin* (5,17-19).

[8] *Ib.* 6,14 f.

[9] *Ib.* 7,8-15.

them Macedonians; while in their eyes Gregory's confession of a single Divinity amounts to Sabellianism[10]

The *tres dei* represents him as confronted with a similar, though not identical, dilemma. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God. It would seem to follow that there are three Gods; if however one maintains a belief in one God, this appears to mean accepting the divinity of the Father while denying that of the Son and Spirit[11] Gregory thus presents himself as faced with a choice between tritheism and extreme Arianism. His correspondent puts the problem in this form: Peter, James and John, though they share the same manhood (ἐν μιᾷ ὄντες τῇ ἀνθρωπότητι)[12] are spoken of as three men. If then we acknowledge three divine Persons (ὑποστάσεις) united in a single nature and single divinity, what right have we to reject a doctrine of three Gods? It is this formulation of the problem that leads Gregory to develope the elegant and captivating theory characteristic of the *tres dei*; namely that it is only a loose use of language that permits us to describe the aforesaid saints as three men; properly speaking, since their manhood is identical, they are all one man. The implication is that a correct understanding of the human situation will resolve the theological problem of the Trinity.

This argument goes beyond the well-known distinction between ὑπόοτασις and οὐσία presented elsewhere, for instance in 'Basil's' *Letter 38*; for that would allow us to treat οὐοία simply as a generic term[13] for the common attribute of divinity which is shared by three divine individuals. The result would be a lucid but undemanding pluralistic doctrine, which admittedly Gregory will seek to correct in other ways. The *tres dei* differs; but its really striking feature, if I judge correctly, is *not* the claim that it is an improper use of language to speak of three human individuals as 'three men'. We could avoid the purely verbal difficulty by means which Gregory himself suggests, by speaking of 'three human persons' or 'instances of the one man', as in *comm not* 29: πολλαὶ ὑποστάοεις τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου - much as we speak of 'three loaves of bread' or 'three golden coins'[14]. Applied to theology, this principle would allow us to avoid the *expression* 'three Gods' while proclaiming three divine Persons who in

[10] *Ib.* 5,10 f.

[11] *Tres dei* (38,3-7).

[12] *Ib.* 38,8 f.

[13] The phrases 'generic identity', 'generic unity', seem often to be used rather loosely, to include unity of species (e. g. of Peter and Paul, who are both men) as well as unity of genus, where the species may differ (e. g. of this man and that horse, who are both animals). I have not tried to correct this imprecision.

[14] *Tres dei* (53 f.).

fact might differ extremely in rank and goodness. The more interesting feature of the *tres dei* is that it seems to argue for a unity of nature in three human individuals which goes beyond the generic unity which is commonly admitted. It is tantalizingly difficult to determine what Gregory has in mind; but he lets it appear that if the human situation is understood in this fresh and challenging way, it presents a close analogy for the Holy Trinity.

We may pause at this point to consider an interpretation of Gregory's view which I am sure should be dismissed. Properly speaking, he says, the phrase 'many men' is equivalent to 'many natures of men' (πολλαὶ φύσεις ἀνθρώπιναι)[15], a phrase which he clearly thinks absurd[16]. Could we interpret his dictum, that the saints are all one man, as intended simply to exclude this idea by asserting, not their mere identity 'as man', but that they are all the same *kind* of man? We ourselves might find this attractive, as we now recognize that there have been distinct types of man; at one time *homo sapiens* and Neanderthal man lived side by side, exhibiting notable differences in physique and way of life, although they belonged to the same species by the accepted criterion that they could interbreed. Similarly we might say that Jacky, Joey and Polly are 'all the same monkey', meaning just that they are all chimpanzees. But Gregory cannot possibly have meant anything like this. He fits humanity into the threefold classification established by Aristotle, namely genus, species and individual[17]. 'Such-and-such an animal' (ζῷον τοιόνδε) is man *simpliciter*, in contrast with the horse[18]; 'such-and-such a man' (τοιόσδε ἄνθρωπος) is suggested as a phrase which might signify an individual, Peter or Paul[19]. Gregory thinks this improper; but throughout his discussion there is no question of the phrase indicating simply a type or variety of man.

We may therefore discount this interpretation. It is humanity as such, paradoxically described as 'one man', which Gregory puts forward as an analogy for the Trinity. But there is an alternative line of argument, which is represented in the *tres dei*[20], but is much more fully developed in the 'Common Notions'[21]; namely that there are important differences between human and divine life which make it

[15] *Ib.* 40,8 f.

[16] Cf. *ib.* 53,6 f.

[17] See *comm not* (29-31), where he gives ζῷον, 'animal', as an example of a genus.

[18] *Ib.* 29,13 f.

[19] *Ib.* 31,20 ff.; 32,12 ff.

[20] *Tres dei* (53,6 ff.)

[21] *Comm not* (23,21 ff.).

excusable to talk of three men while it remains incorrect to refer to three Gods. There is a valuable point made here, which corrects the rather superficial assumption which dominates the *tres dei;* we should indeed give serious attention to the disanalogies between three human individuals and the divine Persons of our trinitarian confession.

It is quite otherwise with the *arguments* offered to show that our talk of 'many men', etc., reflects human conditions which do not apply to God. These are quite unconvincing, and can be briefly dismissed:

(i) We speak of 'many men' because the total number of men is not constant, owing to deaths and births[22].

(ii) Men have different origins (sc. parents), whereas the Trinity has only one[23].

(iii) We speak of 'many orators', etc., because each of them works independently[24].

(iv) More generally, only spatial and material things are numbered[25].

This last contention is clearly false; we can say, 'two two's are four', or enumerate the four-and-twenty elders of the Apocalypse. And its failure suffices to refute the others. Moreover, as to (i), one suspects that Gregory has become confused. The fluctuating number of human individuals is a good reason for calling them 'many' rather than suggesting an exact number; it gives us no good ground for avoiding *all* plural designations and calling them 'one'. As for (iii), we often enumerate partners in a common enterprise, like the Twelve; and as for (ii), we could meet Gregory with the reply that all men are descended from Adam; but if the point at issue is their *immediate* origin, only the Son is *immediately* (προσεχῶς) derived from the Father[26].

We have been describing two alternative lines of argument which cannot easily be conjoined. The first we have described as an argument by analogy; if we understand the case of men correctly, κατὰ τὸν ἐπιστημονικὸν λόγον, we can solve the problem of the Trinity. The second adverts to differences between human and divine life which make it allowable to speak of three men, though we must not speak of three Gods. But perhaps we have already misdescribed the first argument. Gregory mentions three men because it is a convenient and familiar example, and indeed had actually been suggested;

[22] *Ib.* 24,1-14.

[23] *Ib.* 24,26-25,4.

[24] *Tres dei* (47,11 ff.)

[25] *Ib.* 53,9.

[26] See *tres dei* (56,5 f.)

but his reasoning takes no account of any distinctive features of human life; it is based on the logic of genera and species as such, and in the 'Common Notions' we find Gregory applying it to dogs and horses in exactly the same way as he does to men[27].

The point he is making, then, is the perfectly general one: if 'x' names a class or species, e. g. man, it is never correct to use it to name a member of that class, e. g. Paul. In other words, when speaking correctly, we should never use 'man' in the sense of Aristotle's ὅ τις ἄνθρωπος, to name an individual; and if Scripture does this, it is nothing but a kindly accomodation to our slipshod habits[28]. It should of course be remembered that Greek has nothing which precisely corresponds to our indefinite article; one has to say, so to speak, 'Paul is man'. But Gregory knows the Aristotelian usage, though as a good Platonist he prefers the phrase μερικὴ or ἰδικὴ οὐσία[29] which could not suggest, like πρώτη οὐσία, that the individual is the prime reality. Aristotle's ὅ τις ἄνθρωπος is recalled in *Letter 38* by the reference to Job 1:1, ἄνθρωπός τις ἦν, and by the phrase ἐν τῷ τινὶ πράγματι. Gregory is thus perfectly familiar with the use of ἄνθρωπος to mean 'a particular man'; his point is that when speaking correctly one should use the phrase 'human individual' (τοιάνδε ὑπόσταοιν ἀνθρώπου)[30]; though understandably he does not always follow this rule, but is content to say, e. g., 'Luke or Stephen is man', ἄνθρωπος γὰρ ὁ Λουκᾶς ἢ ὁ Στέφανος[31].

In previously published comments on Gregory's view, I stated that his argument is perfectly general; so that if he maintains that Peter, Paul and Barnabas are one man[32], the same could be said of any group of men; it should also be true that Moses, Aristotle and Jezebel are all one man[33]. The argument thus fails because its consequences are plainly absurd. This criticism, I still think, is valid as far as it goes; but I could have pointed out, first, that Gregory does not always argue on purely logical grounds; but secondly, that when he does so, his reasoning is *perfectly* general; it is not concerned with men as such, but with what he alleges is the correct nomenclature for *any* system of genera, species and individuals.

[27] *Comm not* (29 ff.).

[28] See e. g. *ib.* 27,4 ff.

[29] *Ib.* 23,4 ff.

[30] *Ib.* 29,9.

[31] *Tres dei* (40,21 f.).

[32] *Comm not* (23,14).

[33] STEAD, Personality 190; reprinted in *my* 'Substance and Illusion in the Christian Fathers'.

This becomes clear if we consider the discussion which begins at p. 28,9 in the 'Common Notions'. Gregory turns to some unnamed critics who object to his argument as follows. A hypostasis, they say, does not differ from a hypostasis *qua* hypostasis; but that does not mean that all hypostases are one hypostasis. The same can be said of οὐσία. So also again, to say that one divine being, as such, does not differ from another (θεὸς θεοῦ, ἢ θεός, οὐδὲν διαφέρει) does not establish the doctrine that they are one God; just as to say that man does not differ from man *qua* man does not deny the fact that Peter, Paul and Barnabas are three men. 'For οὐσία differs from οὐσία, not *qua* οὐσία, but *qua* such-and-such an οὐσία' (and so also with ὑπόστασις); 'similarly man (differs) from man *qua* such-and-such (a) man, and again god from god *qua* such-and-such a god' (διαφέρει γὰρ οὐσία οὐσίας οὐ καθὸ οὐσία, ἀλλὰ καθὸ τοιάδε οὐσία .. ὡσαύτως καὶ ἄνθρωπος ἀνθρώπου, ἢ τοιόσδε ἄνθρωπος, καὶ πάλιν θεὸς θεοῦ ἢ τοιόδε θεός· τὸ δὲ τοιόσδε ἢ τοιόδε ἐπὶ δύο ἢ καὶ πλειόνων εἴωθε λέγεσθαι) To paraphrase the last clause, particularizing expressions like 'such-and-such' imply that two or more instances of a class are being considered.

Gregory's reply shows that he is adequately instructed in the terminology of logic; but when carefully examined it reveals that only the last clause is effectively considered. And the discussion takes a surprising form. Gregory says that we attach the word 'such-and-such' to a word denoting a genus, thereby picking out a particular species[34]. One would expect him to continue, on the same principle, 'and we attach the word 'such-and-such' to a word denoting a species, so as to pick out a particular individual; saying for instance, 'Paul is a grey-eyed man'. But this is not what Gregory says; he argues that since the particularizing characteristics belong to the individual, the particularizing description must be attached to the word ὑπόσταοις, 'individual', and not to the class-name 'man'. We can thus describe Paul as a grey-eyed individual, but not as a grey-eyed man. On this ground he claims that his critics' case collapses. He is not forced to deny the obvious fact that there are many human individuals; what he claims is that they are only one man; accordingly, he says, we acknowledge three divine hypostases, but confess one God (πολλὰς γὰρ ὑποστάσεις τοῦ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου καὶ τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις τοῦ ἑνὸς θεοῦ φαμεν δικαίως)[35].

[34] E. g. *comm not* (29,13): 'man is such-and-such an animal'; cf. *ib.* 30,11-14, where the particularizing characteristics are explained, and 31,14-16.

[35] *Ib.* (29,9 ff.).

In his reply, then, Gregory has simply maintained his insistence that it is incorrect to use a word which properly denotes a species to pick out a member of that species, as with Aristotle's ὅ τις ἄνθρωπος, 'such-and-such a man'. Note that Gregory does not generalize this rule, as we might expect; we are allowed to say 'an animal' if we wish to refer to the lion, or to man; but we must not say 'a man' if our intention is to indicate Paul. But Gregory has neglected part of his opponents' case; and the consequences for his own views are embarrassing. He has acquiesced in their use of purely logical arguments, assuming an exact analogy between human and divine conditions. It is incorrect, he says, to refer to Paul as 'such-and-such a man'. Can we indeed call him 'a man', as opposed to 'a hypostasis of man'? If not, it would seem to follow that we are not permitted to say 'the Father is God'; but in any case, if the analogy holds, we cannot call him 'a merciful God'. And although we have heard some sort of case for describing the three Persons as one God, it allows of a disastrous weakening of the sense, both of 'God'[36] and of 'one'; so far as the argument goes, it may be that the three Persons are one God in no more rigorous sense than Paul and Jezebel are one man.

Moreover, his critics are surely entitled to reply: 'But this "correct usage" of yours is a most unusual convention, to which, you admit, the Bible does not always conform. Not again, we observe, does your own usage. Surely for all normal purposes we needn't be so fussy; and you should allow us to credit you with a belief in three gods' I do not know what my readers will think of this reply; in my own opinion, it is quite a good one.

2.

So far, however, we have given a rather one-sided impression of Gregory's case, drawing heavily on the 'Common Notions' and presenting him as arguing in terms of abstract logic. In fairness, we should recall the point made in his two later essays, to the effect that the divine nature is mysterious. I do not think he is right in inferring 'therefore it cannot be named', since many much more down-to-earth realities have been given names at a time when almost nothing was known of their nature; thunder, for instance, or electricity. I think Gregory may have been misled by untenable notions about the 'proper name', κύριον ὄνομα[37], since ancient theories of language often assumed that a thing's proper name served not only to designate it but also to reveal its nature[38]. But perhaps we should allow him to suggest, inconsistently no doubt, that there may be aspects of the divine nature which cannot be appropriately handled by our ordinary classifications of genera and species; and conceivably also, that there may be some commonly disregarded unity in the human species which may offer some analogy to the unity of God.

[36] *Trin* (9,8 ff.).

[37] *Tres dei* (42,17).

Let us then consider this other side of Gregory's argument. Once again it is not quite what it appears at first sight. I said earlier that Gregory sometimes argues as if there were an exact analogy between human and divine realities, sometimes draws attention to fundamental differences. We have now qualified the first point; Gregory does assume such an analogy; but that is because he frames his argument in terms of abstract logic. Besides men, he uses dogs and horses as examples[39]; though, to be sure, not named individual horses or dogs, like Bucephalus or Argus; and, so far as I can see, this part of his argument is unaffected by considerations of status or value; it would apply equally well to angels and to minerals, to divinity and to demons.

But what we have called the 'disanalogy' part of his argument does take account of the status of humanity; Gregory contrasts human and divine existence[40]; and he doesn't always present the contrast as one of sheer opposition; in two passages at least he argues that if human individuals exhibit a single undivided nature, 'how much more' (πόσῳ μᾶλλον) must this be true of the divine Persons[41]. Here, then, is the suggestion - much vaguer, much less fully developed, but still detectable - that the 'one man' attributed to Peter, James and John stands for some sort of ideal human unity, so that their fellowship reflects, on the human level, the unity of the three divine Persons in one God. Unless I am greatly mistaken, it is this aspect of Gregory's teaching that has encouraged authorities like Prestige and Kelly to insist that 'for these writers' - the Cappadocians - 'the *ousia* of the Godhead was not an abstract essence but a concrete reality'[42].

[38] See my paper 'Logic and the Application of Names to God'.

[39] *Comm not* (29,14-30,7).

[40] E. g. *tres dei* (41,18 ff.).

[41] *Comm not* (22,18 ff.; 32,21 ff.).

[42] KELLY, Early Christian Doctrines 268.

Kelly quite rightly brings in other evidence to support his judgement, notably the Cappadocians' belief in the simplicity of God. But it would need some close analysis to discover what kind of simplicity is compatible with a belief in three divine Persons[43]. *Letter 38* relates them thus: 'As to their being infinite and incomprehensible and uncreated and not positioned in space and all other such (attributes), there is no variation in the life-giving nature, I mean that of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but a certain continuous and unbroken community is seen in them'. Gregory does *not* seem to be arguing for divine simplicity in the radical sense, implying that all the divine attributes which we distinguish by separate names are in fact identical[44]. On the other hand it appears from the context that the word just translated as 'community' (κοινωνία) stands for the 'common ownership' of these attributes, rather than a more distinctly social 'fellowship' which might be paralleled by human society at its best. In any case, neither the 'Common Notions' nor the 'Three Gods' affords more than faint and elusive indications of this latter view.

To explain their teaching, we may consider three conceptions which Gregory does outline with some clarity:

(1) The *tres dei* treats of φύσις, nature, in contrast with ὑπόστασις, as exemplified by human individuals like Luke and Stephen. 'Yet the nature is one, united in itself, a monad completely indivisible, which is neither increased by addition nor diminished by subtraction' etc.[45]. It is pretty clear that Gregory is thinking of the Platonic Form or Idea; this is strongly suggested by the concluding words 'not divided by the individuals who *participate* in it' and by the emphasis on its unity; the reference to it as 'indivisible' (ἄσχιστος) may well be a Platonic version of the Aristotelian doctrine that substance has no degrees; the Form is indeed *distributed* among its various participants, but in each of them it is present in full[46]. For a Platonist, such a Form is a concrete reality; it is not abstract, in the sense of being merely one aspect of something else; but it is transcendent, not part of our

[43] See KRIVOCHEINE. I have been able to consult this paper through the useful suggestions and help provided by Professor Cornelius PLANTINGA; see his paper 'Gregory of Nyssa and the Social Analogy of the Trinity'

[44] In Gregory's view, God alone is uncreated; but other things, surely, must be non-spatial? If so, the properties named by 'uncreated' and 'non-spatial' cannot be identical. Cf. *trin* (8,8 ff.), where he argues that the various divine titles all refer to the same subject (ὑποκείμενον); he does not claim that they all have the same *sense*, i. e. that the attributes they name are identical. He denies this explicitly at *tres dei* (43,9 ff.).

[45] *Tres dei* (41,2 ff.).

[46] Cf. PARMEN 131 b (I 171 DIELS). But *tres dei* (53,6-9) suggests the rather different point that the 'nature' is always *singular*, though its instances vary in number

everyday world. Unfortunately Gregory confuses this apparently clear picture by going on to mention 'a people ... an army', etc. (λαός, δῆμος, στράτευμα, ἐκκλησία) as examples of things which have singular names although they comprise a multitude of individuals; for it is abundantly clear that peoples and armies can gain increments and suffer losses.

(2) This postscript therefore introduces a second conception, which Gregory developes in the 'Common Notions'[47]. 'The definition of 'man' is not always perceived in the same individuals': ὁ ὅρος τοῦ ἀνθρώπου οὐκ ἀεὶ ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἀτόμοις ἡγοῦν προσώποις θεωρεῖται. Men die, and others are born, so that the human race is constantly varying in number; it is for this reason, so Gregory alleges, that we speak of 'many men' (p. 153 above). In this case we have a reality which is assuredly concrete, and is also perceptible; but it is not indivisible or singular like the 'form' or 'nature'.

(3) Thirdly he refers to the defining properties of substances, τὰ χαρακτηρίζειν οὐσίας εἰωθότα, and says that by speaking of 'such-and-such a substance' we allude to these[48]. Thus by speaking of a form or substance (εἶδος, οὐσία) one conveys the notion, e. g., of 'a being that is irrational, mortal, and liable to neigh'[49]. This, we would surely say, is an abstraction; it picks out certain features of horses, such that no other being possesses all of them together; but it is far from giving a complete description of horses. The horses themselves, of course, are both concrete and perceptible.

We ourselves could easily explain how a human individual, say Paul, is related to each of these conceptions. He *imitates*, or participates in, the Platonic Form, assuming we allow such entities and can understand the unique relation which is said to connect the forms with their instances or copies. But Paul *belongs to*, or is a member of, the human race. And he *exhibits* the features mentioned in the definition. We can thus avoid many of the confusions which arise from asking what Peter and Paul 'are'.

Gregory does not draw these clear distinctions. We have seen that he gives every appearance of confusing the Platonic Form of man with the human race, whereas even such a loose thinker as Philo could sometimes distinguish them[50]. No doubt Gregory's confusion arises partly from misunderstanding of the verb 'to be', which we

[47] *Comm not* (23,21 ff.).

[48] *Ib.* 30,8 ff.

[49] *Ib.* 31,7.

[50] See *post* 105 (II 23,7-12 WENDLAND); *Mos* II 127 (IV 229,20-230,7 CONN); *spec* I 329 (V 79,15-20 CONN).

have deliberately removed from our last few paragraphs. Again, we noted that Greek has no indefinite article. Gregory thus uses expressions which seem like 'Paul is man'. But remembering again its lack of capital letters, this looks much like 'Paul is Saul'; it seems to identify Paul with some entity called 'man', which appears to be single since it is designated by a singular noun. Not that the verb 'to be' is always expressed; and in any case he often says, e. g. 'Paul is-called man', λέγεται, not ἐστίν. But 'is-called' does not help him to distinguish the senses of 'man' in the way we have tried to suggest.

Underlying Gregory's confusion is the thought that ideal humanity, the human race at its best, would provide an analogy for the holy Trinity. He is drawn towards this view by three converging arguments. There is first the point of pure logic, to the effect that class-names should not be used for individuals, because individuals differ whereas the class they belong to is one and the same. Secondly he uses, mostly though not always, the example of three human individuals, arguing that these, *qua* man, are all one man. And thirdly, his human examples are all sets of New Testament saints; it is therefore some sort of ideal for man which is suggested by the 'one man' which they all are.

Can we explain this last phrase? I doubt if we can find an interpretation which is both coherent and reasonably consistent with Gregory's own words. But as a first step, I suggest that we should discount the Platonic Form, at any rate as philosophical critics of Plato now understand it, and opt for something more like 'the human race as God intended it to be'; observing, however, that Christian Platonists of Gregory's time had already moved far in this direction. For if we try to interpret Plato's own theory, it is hard to escape the conclusion that ideal manhood excludes plurality; and if we think more concretely of 'the ideal man', it seems that there must be only one such being, a 'one over many', which would rule out all personal distinctions. And we shall soon involve ourselves in all sorts of difficulties arising from the co-ordination and subordination of the Forms. Is the Ideal Man identical with the Ideal Animal, or distinct? Is he - or are they - on social terms with the Ideal Ox? The problems are insoluble. But Christian Platonists had largely by-passed these problems; they saw no difficulty in referring to the Forms as νοητά, and conceiving these as a heavenly population, comprising various orders of beings, identifiable with the angels and archangels of Christian tradition. It did not then seem that there could be only one of each kind. (Mediaeval theorists, we know, would settle the problem by saying that each of the angels is a distinct species; but this really

amounted to saying that, since angels are immaterial, the differences between them must be differences of form, thus establishing a multitude of sub-species within the species of angels. There was then no difficulty in imagining 'choirs of angels').

Gregory retains some elements of the original Platonic conception; for instance, in claiming that human nature is indivisible, ἄσχιστος. But in saying that Peter, James and John are 'one man', he makes it clear that they do not cease to be three individuals marked off from each other by individuating characteristics; and not all of these purely physical, since they include 'fatherhood' and 'sonship'[51]. Their common humanity must then presumably be interpreted in terms of human sympathy, agreement, common purpose, and the like. And it is, after all, not an absurd suggestion that human language should reflect the condition of the human race, not as it is, but as God meant it to be

We can now at last pronounce on the opinion that Gregory understood the unity of the divine Persons in a concrete sense. Those who think he did so can of course appeal to evidence outside the four works which I have considered. But they often rely on his arguments about the unity of the human race. One cannot always identify the view which they attribute to him; are they thinking of a unity which holds good *notwithstanding* admitted inequality and conflict among men, or of some ideal unity which applies, not to humanity as it is, but to its divinely intended perfection? But in my judgement there is a step to be taken before we can even discuss this point; we need to distinguish between Gregory's intentions and the logic of his argument. If we ask what Gregory's logic actually establishes, the answer must be that it gets us no further than generic unity. Father, Son and Spirit can each be entitled 'God'; though the mere use of this title guarantees very little; the genus of gods includes some disreputable members. But if the question is, what did Gregory seek to establish, and think he had established, we can bring in the much less clearly articulated argument from disanalogy; human life at its best provides some sort of indication of the mutual enjoyment and self-giving of the divine Persons. And human social life, I would agree, is a concrete reality. There is no need to determine that human beings themselves are concrete, but the things they do together are not. An actual conversation is a concrete reality, though it is not a thing but a shared action; abstraction comes in when we characterize it by some

[51] *Comm not* (30,24).

selected feature, describing it variously as a conversation, an argument, a relaxation, or what you will

This of course will not solve all our problems concerning the doctrine of God The unity that we long for is neither solitude nor uniformity, but a unity secured in the face of inequalities of talent, temperament and education It is possibly no more than a misnomer for charity And man is a social creature; to an extent which we seldom consider, our finest virtues are adapted to social failings It is our calling to exercize sympathy as well as intelligence, forbearance as well as courage How can we imagine a divine love and mutual self—giving which is neither tested by adversity nor enlarged by forgiveness? But at this point I would claim that my limited undertaking has been discharged We cannot scale the peaks without traversing the foothills; and I have attempted no more than to clear a path through some of the tangled thickets that obstruct our approach to the holy mountain

Resümee

Gregor von Nyssa entwickelt seine Trinitätslehre in zwei Paaren von Abhandlungen. Im ersten verteidigt er die kappadokische Lehre der drei Personen (ὑποστάσεις), die in einer Substanz (οὐσία) geeint sind, so wie drei menschliche Individuen an einer gemeinsamen Menschheit teilhaben, während seine Kritiker meinen, er überbetone die göttliche Einheit Im zweiten Paar beantwortet er den Einwand: "Aber wir sprechen ohne weiteres von drei Menschen; wenn deine Analogie gilt, sollten wir auch von drei Göttern sprechen" Das ist natürlich ein Streitpunkt; diese Gegner greifen Gregor's Lehre der drei Hypostasen an, die ihrer Meinung nach die göttliche Einheit verdunkelt

Gregor verwendet zwei Hauptargumente (1) Im eigentlichen Sinne ist es ungenau, von drei Menschen zu sprechen; denn da ihre Menschheit eine ist, sind sie alle ein Mensch Dieses Argument ist verworren; Gregor gibt vor, eine lediglich allgemeine Aussage über die Logik von Klassifizierungen zu machen: wenn X eine Art bezeichnet (z B Mensch), ist es niemals korrekt zu sagen "ein X", um ein Glied dieser Art zu bezeichnen (z B "ein Mensch") Dies ist allerdings eine unrealistische Forderung, und Gregor von Nyssa hält sich selbst nicht daran. Sein Argument erscheint nur plausibel, weil er als tatsächliches Beispiel drei gleichgesinnte Heilige nimmt, die als "ein Mensch" handeln aufgrund ihrer gemeinsamen christlichen Bindung

Aber indem er ein günstiges Beispiel anführt, offenbart er das Versagen seines Arguments als allgemeines Prinzip

(2) Das zweite Argument besagt: Wenn das menschliche Leben in seiner besten Form Hinweise auf eine ungeteilte menschliche Natur gibt, "um wieviel mehr" muß dann die göttliche Natur ungeteilt sein Das ist überzeugender. Aber Gregor erklärt nicht deutlich, wie die Einfachheit und Einheit Gottes zu verstehen ist Er vergleicht sie mit der einen platonischen Form der Menschheit, die allen Menschen gemeinsam ist, mit der vermuteten Einheit der menschlichen Rasse und mit der Definition des Menschseins Diese Alternativen sollten differenziert werden, was aber nicht geschieht Daher bleibt Verwirrung; und während Gregor sicherlich recht hat, wenn er darauf besteht, daß die göttliche Natur ein Geheimnis ist, ist er, aufgrund von vermeidbaren Fehlern, nicht hilfreich, ihr näherzukommen

XV

Augustine's Philosophy of Being

Augustine's philosophy of being, the subject of my lecture, might be approached in two ways In traditional terms, we might consider the question *quid est esse*, or alternatively the question *quaenam sunt*. This latter question is easily explained; it means, roughly speaking, what does the real universe contain or comprise, in a large and general sense. Material objects, of course, we can all accept; but what should be said about minds and spirits and the things with which they are concerned? The other question is more difficult to explain in simple terms. Suppose we translate it 'What is being?', we may seem to be asking a question about the word 'being'; what is the sense which Augustine gives to this word? But in fact we shall discover a whole spectrum of senses. 'Being', for Augustine, sometimes appears to express the purely minimal notion of mere existence; but he also uses it as a powerful symbol to formulate his deepest reflections on the spiritual life and the nature of God.

I will therefore tackle the easier question first But before I do so, there must be a prelude. Augustine's philosophy so closely reflects his own personal hopes and concerns that we have to consider how it was influenced by the successive changes in his way of life, and not least by the new responsibilities which he assumed when he became a Christian bishop at the age of forty-one. I must therefore spend a few minutes in recalling the chief events of his career; and if some of my audience find this a familiar tale, they will be the first to admit that it needs to be told.

Augustine was born in AD 354 at Thagaste, a moderate-sized provincial town in North Africa, near the eastern boundary of modern Algeria. His mother was a devout Christian, his father a pagan, who soon recognized the potential of his gifted son and took steps to give him a good education. Augustine's interest in philosophy was aroused by his reading Cicero's exhortation to philosophy called the *Hortensius*. Like many others of its type, this book recommended the quest for wisdom as preferable to all sensual delights and worldly successes.

Augustine's next step, however, seems difficult to explain; he joined the extremist semi-Christian sect of the Manichees. No doubt he was reacting against the rather uninspiring brand of catholic Christianity which he found at Thagaste, and later at Carthage. The Manichees held out an ideal of ascetic living, which intensified Cicero's message; and

they did at least profess to set their ethical teaching within a comprehensive theory of the world and its good and evil constituents. Augustine remained with them for ten years, a surprisingly long time if one considers that he still saw himself as a rising orator and statesman; not to mention the ringing tones in which he later denounced their teaching as pretentious nonsense.

He seems to have escaped from their influence by adopting a sceptical philosophy which threw doubt on the validity of *all* positive convictions; actual knowledge, it was held, is unattainable; the best we can attain is a set of probable beliefs. Sceptical views of this kind had been urged by the Platonist philosopher Carneades in the second century BC, and a sceptical tradition had persisted among Platonists down to Augustine's time. But the majority of Platonists had reverted to a positive transcendental philosophy; Augustine soon adopted their position, and later wrote a treatise *Against the Academics*, arguing that in some cases at least it is indisputable that we really know. Even if I am in doubt, I can be certain that I am doubting, and *a fortiori* that I exist. This argument, of course, resembles that later adopted by Descartes: *Je pense, donc je suis*.

Scholars have given much time and thought to enquiring what exactly was the form of Platonism which had such a powerful appeal for Augustine; in particular, they have asked whether he was influenced mainly by Plotinus or by Porphyry. This question, I believe, largely misses the point. Augustine, in his early writings at least, represents the Platonists as confirming many of the doctrines of Christianity. Their concept of three divine principles, or hypostases, seemed to him a good approximation to the Christian Trinity; their belief in intelligible realities, derived from Plato's theory of Ideas, needed scarcely any modification; the two main faults he alleges are first, their failure to envisage any divine Incarnation, and secondly, their lack of humility in relying on human reason as against divine revelation in prophecy and scripture (*Civ. Dei* 10.29; *Conf* 7.9.14). But a modern reader of either Porphyry or Plotinus will judge that they are separated from Christian orthodoxy by a much wider gulf; Porphyry wrote as a determined opponent of Christianity; Plotinus before him shows no sign of having encountered main-stream Christianity, though he wrote against Christian Gnostics who had some resemblance to Augustine's Manichees. Plotinus usually described his three supreme hypostases as Unity, Mind and Soul; and these were in no sense coequal; on the contrary, the second and third principles reflect the first in a descending scale of purity and value. And in treating of the first hypostasis Plotinus gives great weight to the Platonic principle that pure goodness must be 'beyond mind and being'; it is an ultimate unity which has the potential to produce all ordered multiplicities, beginning with Mind or Intelligence, but remains itself undifferentiated. Thus it cannot be construed as a personal divinity who could think ot be conscious, because thinking entails a distinction between a thinking subject and the object of thought; the One, for Plotinus, does not even know itself; it only generates knowledge of itself in the cosmic Mind. Nor, strictly speaking, can it be described, since description would identify it with something distinct from itself. And although it is the source of all being, Plotinus cannot envisage any creative design or intention, but only an eternal outflow of being which descends progressively through mind and soul to its humblest embodiment in matter.

All this seems foreign to Augustine, who accepted as part of his Christian faith the Nicene doctrine of a Trinity of equal Persons. Can we then find any closer approach in Porphyry? Porphyry is said to have softened the distinctions between the three hypostases—or 'telescoped' them, in Professor A. C. Lloyd's graphic phrase; but he seems to have agreed with Plotinus in detecting a principle 'beyond mind', which is also contemplated 'in a suspension of thinking that is better than thought' (*Sent* 25). And Augustine's philosopher friend Marius Victorinus also spoke of a principle 'prior to being'.[1]

It is clear, then, that Augustine's philosophy was largely independent of these great Neoplatonists. So far as I can discover, he does not describe God as 'beyond being'; on the contrary, he tells us, *Deus est esse*.[2] And although he takes perfect unity to be an essential feature of divine being, he sees it as a unity of positive attributes; thus God's wisdom is wholly good, and his goodness is wholly wise; but we do not *misrepresent* God if we call him wise or good. Moreover Augustine is content to refer to God as Mind; he does not think that mental operations begin with the second Person, the divine Word. And he speaks of God's loving care for his creation. All these doctrines correspond with an older tradition of Platonic thought which saw no difficulty in describing God as Mind, and which could envisage the divine act of creation suggested by a more literal reading of Plato's *Timaeus*. It seems, then, that Augustine was influenced more than he admits by older Platonist writers such as Apuleius, and was therefore encouraged to read Plotinus and Porphyry attending more to their continuity with earlier Platonism than to the distinctive features identified by modern scholars. It was for this reason that Platonism appeared to offer an easy approach to Christianity.

The rest of Augustine's philosophical development can be briefly told. We soon find him at Milan, profoundly impressed by the sermons of the eloquent Bishop Ambrose, but also by the example of self-

[1] *Ad Candidum* 2.28, 3.7, 18.2 (Migne, P.L. 8, 1021a,c, 1028b).
[2] *Mor. Eccl* 2 1.1, cf. *En Psalm* 134.4, *Trin* 5 2.3.

sacrifice and devotion presented by much humbler Christians. He returned to the Bible, and especially St Paul. Writing later on, in the *Confessions*, he represents his conversion as an inspired resolve to fulfil the obligations which his intellect had already accepted; to submit to the authority of God's word in Scripture, and to renounce for ever all thought of sexual satisfaction. It is something of a surprise to discover that most of his writings during the next few years prove to be essays in Platonist philosophy. But the explanation has already been given. The final step towards Christian discipleship lay in acceptance of the Bible and of the ascetic life required of an uncompromising Christian. For its intellectual substructure he was still content to return to Platonism.

Augustine's philosophical activity was by no means over; indeed its most brilliant achievements were yet to come. But they were channelled into a peculiar course by the necessity of reconciling his Platonist assumptions with a Christian obedience to which his attitude was in some respects uncritical. He was hampered at times by an over-submissive acceptance of Church traditions and by a literalistic reading of the New Testament, not always proof against actual mistranslation; both these factors combined, for instance, to bring him to the abominable doctrine that unbaptized infants will inevitably suffer eternal punishment. It is hard to imagine the intellectual agony in which such a belief imposed itself on one whose belief in God's all-embracing mercy was so profound. But his philosophical enterprise and resourcefulness were irrepressible; he remains by far the most original and wide-ranging thinker of later antiquity, and only a minority of critics have ever supposed that his Christian faith in some way disqualifies him from being recognized as a philosophical colossus.

Let us then consider Augustine's picture of the universe. What sorts of things does it contain? Like the majority of ancient thinkers Augustine makes a primary division into material and immaterial reality,[3] which roughly corresponds to the biblical distinction between the visible and the invisible. Alternatively, he often speaks of the world, the soul and God.[4] This makes the useful point that the human soul acts as a bridge between the physical universe and the higher sphere; on the other hand it fails to mention the invisible part of God's creation, that is, created spirits or angels, which were firmly established in the Jewish–Christian tradition, supported by the 'created gods' of Plato's *Timaeus* 41a, as it was commonly interpreted.

But if we look more closely at the contrast of material and immaterial, we discover a very curious fact. Augustine has a clear and consistent

[3] *C. Acad.* 3.17.37; *Civ. Dei*, see n. 5.
[4] *Mor. Eccl.* 1.5.7–6.10, *Div. Quaest. 83*, 45.

view of material beings, which appears several times in his *City of God*;[5] there is an ascending scale of value, which embraces 'stones, plants, animals and intelligent beings', as he puts it at 5:11, the latter class including both men and angels, and thus impinging on the higher sphere. But if we look for a similar brief outline of this higher world, we shall be disappointed; we discover only a multitude of elevated but conflicting suggestions. The reason for this is that for the material world Augustine can draw upon a well-established tradition of a *scala naturae* which goes back to Aristotle, and sees the natural world as arranged in a series of levels, each of which enjoys all the advantages of its inferiors but possesses some distinctive power of its own. Thus physical substances are distinguished by their consistency, *hexis*; living creatures by *phusis*, the power to nourish themselves and grow. Animals also possess *psuchē*, soul, which gives them perception and movement; and the next level is marked by reason, which belongs to man, but also to immortal spirits.

But if we look for a similar diagram of the higher world, we find no such consistent scheme. God, the universe itself, the divine Ideas, the soul of the world, star-gods, demons, angels, demi-gods and heroes, appear and disappear in a bewildering variety of combination.[6] For a brief example, we may turn to Apuleius, whose work on Plato was known to Augustine, and who presents us with three totally unrelated schemes in two chapters, 6 and 11, of Book I. In Chapter 6, the primary forms of being are the supreme God or Mind, the Forms of things, and the world-soul; this already conflicts with Chapter 5, where the initial principles are God, the Forms, and matter. Chapter 11 offers a scheme based on the four elements, which crosses the boundary between earth and heaven; there are fiery beings, the star-gods; airy beings, the demons; and those allied to water and earth, namely land-animals and plants. In the same chapter he mentions three classes of gods; the supreme God, star-gods, and local deities.

It seems, then, that in Augustine's time there was no commonly accepted map of the intelligible world; and the reason probably lies in the perplexities of Platonist philosophy. That venerable construction which we know as Plato's theory of Ideas had left behind so many discrepancies and loose ends that the later Platonists could never achieve what they so greatly desired, namely to bring together all their master's inspired pronouncements into a consistent scheme.

Let me try to indicate the position in a much over-simplified sketch. Plato was trying to solve several problems which he did not clearly

[5] 5.11, 8.6, 11.16.
[6] See for instance Xenocrates fr. 15 (in H. Diels, *Doxographi Graeci*, 304); cf. Eusebius, *Demonstr. Evang.* 4.5.12.

distinguish. Amongst other questions, he reflected on the nature of a term like 'justice'. This does not seem to refer to a particular thing, in the way that the name 'Socrates' indicates a particular man, or 'Crete' a particular island. 'Justice' seems to be an inclusive term which designates a whole number of possible just actions. On the other hand, it seemed likely that these just actions are so named, and form a coherent class, as approximating to an ideal standard of justice; after all, if a ring or a building are described as circular, this means that they conform to the geometrical pattern of a perfect circle. Plato thus envisages a system of classes, each one defined by its perfect exemplar; his difficulties begin when he sees that there are some classes where no perfection seems to be possible. Mud is no less real than justice; but what sense is there in imagining a perfectly muddy mud, or for that matter a perfect all-disabling disease, or a perfect standard of *injustice*?

Plato himself developed his theory along several different lines which could not be brought into agreement. First, regarding his Ideas mainly as class-concepts, he sought to arrange them in a rational hierarchy, in which the more inclusive Ideas were superior. But this is only possible if they are reduced to concepts considered *in abstracto*. Obviously the class of animals is larger than the class of horses; but what kind of creature is the animal-as-such? And what sort of qualities would the ideal animal possess? Even the ideal horse is none too easy on the mind; can we seriously picture a beast which combines the virtues of a racehorse and a cart-horse? The alternative, it seems, would be to say that their virtues are not virtues at all; one is strong and the other is speedy because they both *fail* to reproduce the qualities of an ideal horse which is neither! But despite such problems, many Platonists continued to think of the Ideas as a population of real and co-ordinate beings.

Secondly, Plato presented his Ideas as *objects* of thought; he rejected the view that they were merely thoughts, or patterns of thought; but he left it unclear whether the Ideas themselves *exercise* thought; whether they are intelligent as well as intelligible. To be sure, it is hard to believe that, say, a perfect circle can think; but there are several considerations which favour the theory of intelligent Ideas. For one thing, Plato himself declared that the soul was 'akin to the Ideas'; we can then deduce correctly that the Ideas are akin to souls. Secondly, if one accepts the old notion that like is known by like, it follows that the Ideas must resemble the mind that knows them. Thirdly, it appears that *some* Ideas at least should be intelligent; if intelligence is a virtue, then the ideal man should be intelligent. Fourthly, we are told that Plato came to think of the Ideas as definable in terms of number, or of some quasi-numerical property such as harmony or proportion; and Plato's disciple Xenocrates undoubtedly defined the soul in similar terms. Some thinkers, admittedly, treated both numbers and souls as intermediate

beings, ranking below the Ideas but above material things. But if intelligence is good, there is something strange in the doctrine that the highest reality cannot be intelligent.

On the other hand, a salient fact about souls, or personalities, is that they are strongly individualized; no two souls are alike. Thus any attempt to assimilate Ideas and souls will conflict with the notion of the Idea as a class-concept, a 'one over many'. Nevertheless even Plotinus, who did not in principle set much value on diversity, came to think that there must be individual Ideas corresponding to each human individual; and less professional writers, including many Christians, made this equation without any difficulty; human souls in their unfallen state, before they enter the body, simply are Ideas; and there are similar but purer beings who are not attracted by bodily pleasures and remain in the ideal world; these are identified as 'demons' in the pagan tradition, and as 'angels' by Jews and Christians.

Finally, we should consider Plato's myth of the world's creation in the *Timaeus*. A divine craftsman makes the world of space and time according to an eternal model. It might seem, then, that he simply copies patterns of perfection which exist outside and above him. But an alternative theory was developed very early, perhaps by Xenocrates; namely that the divine craftsman himself imagined these patterns within his own mind before putting them into concrete form. This retains something of the old belief that the Ideas are simply thoughts; but it gives then objective validity, as being the archetypal thoughts of the divine creator. This view was no doubt more acceptable to religious minds; and it is worth noting that the devout but anti-Christian Porphyry came round to it under the influence of Plotinus, agreeing with his master that 'the Ideas are not outside the Intellect'.

If we now return to Augustine, we can find most of these conceptions reproduced in his writings. He gives a blanket approval to Plato's doctrine of an intelligible world, revealed by dialectics. In particular he pictures the Ideas as patterns of moral virtues, and again as archetypes for God's creations existing eternally in his mind.[7] Indeed, like many Christian Platonists, he believes that the mind is so much superior to the body that intellectual activity as such is the first step towards heavenly virtue, and that truth—any truth whatsoever—has divine authority over our minds.[8] He finds it hard to admit that any mental operation might be merely pointless or misdirected. Fortunately he is enough of a Christian realist to correct this intellectualist bias on occasion. He notes, for instance, that not all mathematicians are wise;[9]

[7] *Div. Quaest. 83*, 46
[8] *Lib. Arb.* 2 6.14ff., esp. 2.12.33–4.
[9] Ibid. 2.11.30f.; *Gen. ad Lit.* 2.17.37

he believes that the demons are clever, but not good; and of course he recognizes the importance of material symbols as presented in the sacraments.

But if Augustine sees the Ideas as archetypes for all God's created works, does he think there is an archetype for each individual creature? Scholars have alleged that this is so;[10] but I do not find their evidence convincing. 'Each single thing is created by its own principle', says Augustine: *singula propriis sunt creata rationibus (Div quaest 83*,46.2). But the context implies that 'each single thing' should be understood as 'each species'; Augustine has just used the standard examples of 'man' and 'horse'. In any case, the theory of individual archetypes is hardly attractive except as applied to intelligent beings; it seems absurd to suppose that God has an ideal specification for each individual flea and every grain of sand. With human individuals it may be otherwise. Plotinus thought so; and Augustine's God might reasonably have an immutable idea of what each of us should be, distinct of course from our all-too-changeable soul.

The question of intelligent Ideas is also difficult to resolve. Some of the Platonic arguments should appeal to Augustine; thus ideal faith or ideal wisdom can hardly exist without intelligence; but perhaps he did not think of these virtues as distinct intelligent beings; more probably he saw them as God's own living and creative thoughts which interpenetrate each other. Augustine does of course believe in distinct *created* intelligences, which correspond to the spirits or demons of later Platonism. But he usually describes them in biblical and Christian terms; he recognizes good angels and wicked demons, but denounces the morally intermediate demons described by Apuleius.

I have so far presented Augustine in fairly conventional terms. But a different, and rather startling perspective emerges if we try to regard him, not as a Platonizing Christian theologian, but as a renegade Christianizing Platonist. Plotinus had seen the universe as an ordered continuum in which pure spirit eternally reflects itself in lower orders of being. Augustine adopts the Christian belief in a divine act of creation inaugurating a world of time and space, and pictures intelligent spirits in transit between the eternal and the spatiotemporal realms.[11] Theologians have of course defended this concept of creation as essential for establishing the unique and personal dignity of God; and I shall not dispute this verdict. Nevertheless one has to reckon with the complications it introduces into an already complex and tangled metaphysical scheme.

[10] J. Meyendorff, *New Schol* 16 (1942), 36; V. J. Bourke, *Augustine's View of Reality*, 5, n. 21.

[11] *Civ. Dei* 8–9, *passim*

First, we have noted Augustine's belief in the divine archetypes of moral virtues. These archetypes clearly function as ideals to which things ought to conform; but should we credit them with some sort of dynamic function as well? Heavenly faith, we might say, is the touchstone of earthly faith, or its formal cause; but do we see it also as an inspiration which moves us through our love for it? And if so, do we also see the heavenly right-angled triangle as thrilling us with the desire to study mathematics? However this may be, Augustine introduces another set of moving causes, the so-called seminal reasons, which originate in Stoic rather than in Platonic philosophy, and are principles of growth and development at the physical level.

Whatever be the case with the divine archetypes, it must be that these seminal reasons act on each individual thing; indeed they are pictured as present within it. And there is another link between God and his individual creatures, namely his complete and perfect knowledge of them. This knowledge relates to creatures in space and time, but it is itself eternal and unextended. It is tempting to describe it as a compound of perfect perception, perfect memory, and perfect foreknowledge; but if God is eternal, we cannot credit him with these three distinct powers.[12] In a sense, of course, God knows when things happen; he is aware that Judas betrays Jesus on a certain Thursday evening, perhaps in 33 BC; but he can never know that this is going to happen, or that it has happened. But he can, I think, know what it feels like to know these things, since he knows what goes on in the minds of his creatures. Indeed in his *Confessions* (11.13 15ff.) Augustine was prepared to define time itself in psychological terms: the past is what we remember, the future is what we foresee. On this theory, if God knows how the experience of remembering differs from that of foreseeing, he knows all that can be known about the lapse of time. But in later life Augustine did not insist on this peculiar theory.

God's knowledge, of course, raises moral problems, which can be mentioned only in passing. There is, first, God's knowledge of human sin; how can God understand sinful thoughts without in some sense admitting them? If God is a perfectly simple being, as Augustine holds, we cannot say that he understands sinful thoughts but disowns them, for that would imply a conflict between sympathy and repugnance. But perhaps the notion of absolute divine simplicity needs to be reconsidered.

Moreover, if God creates a world in which he knows that the majority of rational creatures will sin and thus be consigned to eternal punishment, how is he himself to be cleared of blame? Augustine holds that God intends to maximize the amount of goodness in the world, and

[12] *Trin* 15 7.13.

does so by including beings of lesser value, who are therefore bound to sin. But this policy is hardly justified by its results. A second answer is to say that God acts justly towards all his creatures, but shows undeserved mercy to some. The objections to this view are obvious, but hardly belong to our subject; but we may briefly notice one subsidiary point. It might appear that if God foreknows that X will sin, then it is inevitable that X will sin; and if it is inevitable, then X is not free and cannot be blamed. Augustine replies, in his work *On Free Choice* (3.4.9–11), that God does not cause X to sin by foreknowing it; what God foreknows is that X will freely choose to sin, and his foreknowledge depends on X's choice. In two later works he takes a different line, suggesting that God does indeed contrive that some individuals shall sin, and sin of their own free choice; he does this by omitting to supply the grace to overcome temptation (*Qu. Simp.* 2.13; *Sp. et Lit.* 34.60). I do not think this in the least acceptable as a way to vindicate God's goodness. Nor do I think Augustine gives an adequate account of human freedom. But he does maintain, consistently, that God does not cause future events *merely* by foreknowing them.

We should remind ourselves that human beings are not the only rational moral agents. There are also created spirits, which exist apart from space and time, but are in some sense capable of change. In practice Augustine divides them into two opposing classes. The better sort, the angels, choose to attach themselves to God, and so enjoy a share in his immutability; but this is properly a moral constancy, resulting not from nature but from choice. Contrasted with these are the devils, who seem to practise a kind of negative immutability in the fixity of their self-assertion and destructive intent.

A second order of intelligent beings are destined to enjoy a brief existence in space and time; namely, our human selves. Augustine does not think, with Plato, that our souls exist in time before they animate our bodies; indeed he is notably unsure about their origin. They are, he affirms, God's creatures, and destined for eternal existence; but the only eternity we can be sure that they enjoy is one qualified by their thoughts and actions in their earthly lives. It is therefore outside time, but we can only conceive it as beginning *after* their lives are completed.

How then does human life begin? It seems that God eternally purposes to create human souls, or at least to introduce them, in a vastly complicated temporal succession. Two points about this divine procedure may be mentioned as especially strange. First, these created intelligences begin to act within the world at moments which God allows the human animals to determine in response to their own sexual passions. And secondly, although the souls proceed in purity from the creative hand of God, they are immediately thrown down into a tainted environment, so that before they have a chance to prove themselves

they incur and *deserve* the indignation and righteous vengeance of God. And this apparent frustration of God's creative work results from the disobedience of Adam and Eve, that is, of only two among the myriads of human spirits. It is the measure of Augustine's greatness that he could win widespread approval for a theory which to all appearances is so improbable, inconsistent, and immoral.

So much, then, for the realities named by the term 'being' in Augustine's philosophy. We must now conclude with some remarks on the more abstruse question *quid est esse*; in other words, how does Augustine interpret the term 'being' itself.

A convenient starting-point is a passage in his Letter XI to Nebridius, which tells us that there are three aspects of being: *primo ut sit, deinde ut hoc vel illud sit, tertium ut in eo quod est maneat quantum potest*; that is to say, 'being itself, being this or that, and continuing to be'. Augustine tells us that these three aspects are distinct but inseparable, like the Persons of the Trinity.[13] There are several similar formulations, some of them using the technical term 'species' in place of 'being this or that'. Another series of passages expounds the biblical text 'Thou hast made all things by measure, number and weight' (Wisdom 11:21), which Augustine tries to interpret along the same lines.[14] This is not an easy task; in particular the term 'measure', *mensura*, does not seem an obvious equivalent for the apparently abstract notion of being itself.[15] With the second term, 'number', he is more fortunately placed, since it recalls the Platonic theory that species can be explained in mathematical terms; so he writes, *numerus omni rei speciem praebet (Gen. ad Lit.* 4.3.7). His treatment of *pondus*, 'weight', is extraordinarily ingenious and varied, though the details hardly belong to a philosophical lecture; it stands for the ability of things to find their proper level; for the tendency of the rational will to go where it belongs; and also for a thing's internal coherence, and so for its permanence, which for Augustine is a mark of value.[16]

Let us ask Augustine a few questions about his threefold scheme, along the lines of Aristotle's *Categories*. First, how widely does it apply? For he sometimes uses the phrase 'Everything that is', but sometimes speaks of 'every nature or substance', thus referring especially to things, or what Aristotle calls substances, rather than to qualities or relations. Augustine does I think have substances chiefly in mind, which is natural enough, but sometimes misleads him; on the other hand he notes the eternal patterns of some qualities, such as virtues, and of

[13] *Div. Quaest. 83*, 18; *Ver. Relig.* 7.13.
[14] *Gen. ad Lit.* 4.3.7ff.
[15] *C. Faust. Manich.* 20.7.
[16] *Gen. ad Lit.* 4.4.8.

quantities or numbers; and of course he uses relative terms like 'Father' and 'Son' to denote divine realities. So he recognizes the four principal Aristotelian categories. He may perhaps have adopted the Neoplatonic theory that in the intelligible world all terms are substantial; but even Aristotle noted that some things can be both substantial and relative.[17]

Next, Aristotle would like us to ask Augustine, does he think that being is capable of degrees? Can one *be* intensely, or feebly? Certainly Augustine speaks of greater and less being, and of supreme being (*magis esse, minus esse, summe esse, Civ. Dei* 12.2.9, *Ver. Relig.* 18.35); but does this apply to all aspects of being? With regard to the third of these, permanence, the answer is clear; obviously things can be more and less permanent. But to say that one can possess a specific form more and less completely sounds improbable, and is certainly a direct contradiction of Aristotle; while common sense insists that either a creature is a horse, or it is not. But Augustine clearly did believe that a specific form, for instance humanity, can be more and less perfectly realized; and this belief is linked with his theory of evil as a defect of being. We cannot stay to examine this theory, though I myself distrust it. At the very best, it needs a good deal of elaboration to make it even plausible. Physical deformity, mental deficiency, and moral obliquity can all stand under the broad umbrella of defective humanity. No doubt all are bad; but they are bad in very different ways.

What about the first term of the triad, namely being as such? Here I think Augustine is imprecise. Sometimes his words imply something very like our notion of bare existence; he uses the phrases *utrum omnino sit* and *quo constat (Div. quaest. 83*,18), which recall the language of the law-courts, where one has to establish that a piece of property does actually exist before disputing its ownership.[18] Here there is a straight contrast of the real with the fictitious. In another passage (*Civ. Dei* 11.27) Augustine uses the phrase *ipsum esse* to mean the mere existence, or life, which all creatures try to preserve; this makes a rather different point, for real creatures obviously do not struggle to prevent themselves from becoming fictitious! But yet again, this same phrase *ipsum esse* is used to indicate divine being. This has some analogy with mere existence, as it is in some sense unqualified; God clearly does not belong to any created species. But what exactly is meant by referring to God as pure being?

In fact Augustine declares that God is the source of measure, number and weight—or their various equivalents—but is superior to all of them. On the other hand, as we noted, he can say, *Deus est esse*; he does not appear to have pronounced that God is beyond being. But I am

[17] Plotinus, *Enn.* 6 1 3; Aristotle, *Categ.* 7, 8 a 13ff.
[18] Cf. Quintilian, *Inst.* 7 6 36.

inclined to think that he has two different conceptions in view. He reproduces the traditional Platonic-Christian concept of a creative intelligence which foreordains what variety of things are to exist in the world, because it is best that it should be so. But beside this appears the more difficult, and more characteristic idea of the One as a source of being, pure being, from which the distinct varieties of being descend by a process of diminution, rather like the refraction of white light to produce the various colours.[19] Pure being, in this sense, is an intensely powerful reality; Augustine describes it as the source of life, sensation and purposive motion (*c. Faust. Man.* 20.7); elsewhere he associates it with unity, goodness, and truth. But he offers us the paradox that the highest form of life is found in a Being which lacks all the characteristics which we associate with life, unless unity, goodness and permanence can provide some sort of bridge; and the approach to such a being should be to lay aside not only action but thought, indeed everything that is regulated by number and proportion, and to lose oneself in the contemplation of the absolute One.

I think, then, that the alternative conception better expresses the Christian doctrine of creation, indeed of divine being; and it should also be more acceptable to us moderns, impressed as we are by Darwinian theories of evolution; for we normally think that new species have evolved by developing new positive capacities which enable them to compete and survive, rather than by the self-restriction of an undifferentiated source of being.

Both these theories, however, presuppose an optimistic view of the universe, as expounded by many Stoics and Platonists; and both are difficult to reconcile with Augustine's vision of a universe which God knows from all eternity will be darkened and corrupted by sin. The problem would be eased if we could believe, with John Lucas, that God's foreknowledge is not absolute, so that there was at least a chance that Adam would not sin; or better still, if we could persuade Augustine that man's absolute need of God's grace need not imply an absolute entanglement in corruption. As it is, I suspect that he has involved himself in a contradiction from which even his own masterful ingenuity could find no way of escape.

I will conclude with some further remarks on the subject of permanence; for permanence is a characteristic which Augustine values highly; he thinks it an essential mark of true goodness and of God's being. But the connection between permanence and value is not immediately obvious. Aristotle indeed challenged Plato on this point, observing—perhaps not very seriously—that a white post that lasts a long time is no *whiter* than one which lasts for a day (*NE* 1096b, 4). We might of course

[19] *Civ. Dei* 8 6, 12.2; cf. *Nat. Bon.* 3.

object that this is not a good analogy for moral qualities. If we call a man generous, we mean that he has a permanent disposition towards unselfish giving. Thus an isolated impulsive action cannot count as generosity; to quote Aristotle again, it is virtuous only if it proceeds from a fixed intention (ibid. 1105a, 34). But unfortunately for this argument, it applies to vices as well as to virtues; and just as a throw-away largesse doesn't prove a man generous, so a momentary panic doesn't brand him a coward. Augustine is obviously captivated by the old Platonic doctrine that instability is a mark of vice, and *per contra*, that stability is necessary for virtue; but once again, he is not consistent; he can insist that some men acquire a habit of self-assertion and wrong-doing which determines all their actions (*Gr. Xti.* 18f.). It seems to follow that stability or permanence is a necessary condition of moral goodness; but it cannot possibly be a sufficient condition.

In dealing with God himself, Augustine introduces the much stronger notion of immutability, which we cannot discuss at this stage. But even the requirement of stability poses problems for the moralist; how can one acquire it without becoming inflexible and insensitive? And *per contra*, what can a philosopher make of those delightful acts of spontaneous generosity which we associate with the alabaster cruse of ointment and with St Francis of Assisi? No doubt the answers to such questions are implicit in Augustine's writings; but he does not present them in worked-out form. And the happy tribe of Augustinian scholars who quote the master's words with placid approval have seldom explored these problems, and give us little help towards their solution.

The moral, I think, is that it is more important to be stimulated and inspired by Augustine than to put together an Augustinian system. Augustine is a fascinating character; devout, yet ingenious; authoritarian, yet sympathetic. As a philosopher he has one outstanding weakness, namely his uncritical acceptance of a Church tradition that had been fixed through the labours of lesser men; and this of course includes an approach to the Bible which we moderns have been forced to discard. But no one can wholly free himself from the influence of his predecessors. Augustine is not only a saint, but an innovative genius whose work will hold a permanent appeal.

The Intelligible World, in Platonic Tradition, Marius Victorinus and Augustine

In his *Literal Commentary on Genesis* (12.10.21) Augustine has a short passage in which he discusses the meanings of the words 'intelligible' and 'intellectual'. The latter, we would suppose, denotes 'that which can think'; the other, 'that which can be thought'. But rather surprisingly Augustine declares that they have the same meaning; whichever word we use, *hoc idem significamus*. Does he mean that the two words are strictly synonymous, or merely that their reference is the same? He does not make this at all clear. But he notes that some thinkers draw a distinction. Everyone, says Augustine, admits that intellect is perceived only by intellect: *mens quippe non videtur nisi mente*. But can there be anything that is intelligible but does not itself think? This, he says, is a question, which he is not prepared to discuss; he will treat the two terms as equivalent: *nunc intellectuale et intelligibile sub eadem significatione appellamus*.

This is a surprising doctrine. It conflicts with our own usage, and indeed with that of the Greek words νοερός and νοητός, which are very rarely confused. We would suppose that *intellectualis* refers to an active power, *intelligibilis* to a passive suitability. Not that *intelligibilis* exactly corresponds to the English word 'intelligible'. It certainly does not suggest 'easily intelligible'; it has, rather, a restrictive sense: 'accessible, if at all, only to the mind'. We might agree that Einstein's theory is *intelligibilis* when we could hesitate to call it intelligible.

What then is to be counted as intelligible? Augustine's position, I think, is confused. He clearly accepts the commonplace distinction between thinking and unthinking beings, and again that between sense and thought with their respective objects. But he also holds that intellect plays an essential part in sense perception, which distinguishes it from mere sensation [1]. But if so, then

[1] *Lib. Arb.* 2.3.9; *Conf.* 7.17.23, 10.6.9; *Gen. Lit.* 12.10.24. The doctrine of course is known earlier; see e.g. Cicero *Acad.* 1.40; Sextus Empiricus *adv. Math.* 7.297, 11.226; Porphyry in *Stoic. Vet. Frag.* 2.74.

everything we know is in some sense *intelligibile*; and if we equate the two terms, is in some sense *intellectuale* This does not establish that every mind can be known; but it does seem to imply that everything that can be known is a mind

Augustine's ontology clearly builds on his Platonism; the problem has been studied in depth, notably by Pépin, Hadot, Krämer and Rist [2] Such scholars have tended to consider not simply the relation of the Platonic Ideas, to the mind, but in particular their relation to a supreme mind, the Craftsman, the Demiurge or God, or again to the *anima mundi* which Plato conceives as a soul partaking in reason, *Timaeus* 36e But if we intend to explore the background of Augustine's dictum in fairly brief compass, it will be preferable, and I think allowable, to take a democratic line and speak only of the minds and souls with which we are acquainted

(1) Plato several times declares that the soul is akin to the Ideas The Ideas are intelligible *par excellence*; the soul's most distinctive activity is that of thinking, νοῦς or νοεῖν In what ways does the soul resemble the Ideas? It is not-composite, invisible, and at least relatively unchanging, ἀεὶ ὡσαυτῶς ἐχοῦσα and thus akin to the divine These descriptions are drawn from the *Phaedo*; but in a much later work, *Laws* 10, 898e, Plato declares it intelligible to the mind alone, νοητὸν δ'εἶναι νῷ μόνῳ [3]

But as we all know Plato soon developed his views both of the soul and of the Ideas In the *Republic* and the *Phaedrus* we move from the Idealized soul of the philosopher to the diversified and self-conflicting souls of men at large, with the proviso, of course, that intelligence remains their most distinctive and most valuable attribute or activity, though not always the most effective As for the Ideas, Plato clearly began by thinking of them as principles of explanation; they are often put forward in answer to the question 'What is so-and-so?', as applied to a general name denoting some moral quality or virtue But they soon come to embody a large variety of interests, both for Plato himself and still more for his successors Considered as principles of explanation, Plato seems to have maintained the belief, despite all difficulties, that there is an Idea corresponding to every general name [4] In other contexts the

[2] J Pépin 'Une curieuse déclaration idéaliste de Saint Augustin', *Rev d Hist et Phil Rel* 34 (1954), 373–400; P Hadot, 'Être, Vie, Pensée chez Plotin et avant Plotin' *Les Sources de Plotin, Entretiens Hardt* 5 (1960), 105–41; H J Krämer *Der Ursprung der Geistmetaphysik* (Amsterdam 1967); J. Rist *Eros and Psyche* (Toronto 1964) pp 61–7, *Plotinus the Road to Reality* (Cambridge 1967) pp 85ff

[3] Cf n 1

[4] W D Ross *Plato's Theory of Ideas* (Oxford, 1951), pp 79, 141 172; cf G Vlastos, Degrees of Reality in Plato' pp 7 8 n 1 in R Bambrough (ed) *New Essays on Plato and Aristotle* (London 1979)

notion of value comes to the fore; the Idea is the standard of perfection to which its counterparts approximate This seems to imply that there can be no Ideas of indifferent or worthless things [5] Yet again, the Idea is conceived as *conferring* either distinctive character or distinctive value on its participants, as twoness makes things two, an aspect which Aristotle describes as the 'formal cause';[6] on this score it has analogies with the soul, traditionally regarded as the source of movement and life

(2) It will not be possible to chart all these conflicting traditions; but one axiom which is particularly important as assimilating the intellectual soul with its objects is the commonplace that like is known by like This dictum seems to have gained prestige with the passage of time Aristotle refers to Plato for the doctrine γινώσκεσθαι τῷ ὁμοίῳ τὸ ὅμοιον, but himself develops the theory which goes by the name of 'the identity of the mind with its object'.[7] And whatever qualifications Aristotle may have envisaged, the dictum is quoted with surprising assurance by Plotinus and Porphyry alike [8]

Such a manner of thinking is so remote from our own that it is difficult to perceive the tacit qualifications that must have governed its use In some sense, clearly, it is the mind that knows the way to Larissa – as Augustine will agree But we do not think the mind is long and rough and stony Mathematics, moreover, is a purely intellectual pursuit; but in learning the multiplication table our mind entertains or acquires its particulars, but remains distinct We do not *teach* the multiplication table by causing it to understand us! Aristotle does indeed suggest that teaching and learning are the same process, though differently conceived (*Phys* 3 2, 202 a 20) But one can learn without being taught; it cannot then be argued that learning must involve contact with an intelligent being Moral knowledge is perhaps more significant; to love is a *sine qua non* for understanding what love is But whatever our own reserves, it is plain that the axiom was much respected in antiquity, and that it influenced Augustine

(3) Quite apart from these general considerations, it must appear that some Ideas at least are intelligent, especially the Ideas of rational beings, whether men or demons Plato's argument in *Sophist* 248e points the way; it is phrased in abstract terms, contending that movement, life and thought are present in absolute reality, τῷ παντελῶς ὄντι, but the latter phrase is explained by an earlier statement (246 b) that real being

[5] *Parmenides* 130 d

[6] *Phaedo* 101 c; cf Aristotle s criticism, *Gen & Corr* 2 9 esp 335 b 18; my 'axe' illustration below suggests an answer, without discounting other causes

[7] *De Anima* 1 2, 404 b 16; 3 7, 431 a 1; cf n 9 and J Pépin, op cit, pp 393–5

[8] *Enn* 5 3 5–6; *Sent* 44: Alex Aphr *Mantissa* p 108 Bruns

consists in intelligible and, incorporeal Forms: νοητὰ ἄττα καὶ ἀσώματα εἴδη τὴν ἀληθινὴν οὐσίαν εἶναι. Intelligence is part of human perfection; it must, therefore, attach to the Idea of man. But this reflection, as we shall see, leads us away from conceiving of the Ideas as inclusive concepts arranged in a hierarchy. Our ordinary systems of classification lead us to think that all members of a species belong to it equally; Thersites is a man no less than Achilles. But the theory of Ideas assumes a connection between generality and value such that a species is more truly embodied in its best members than in the average; while even the best fall short of the Idea itself. Nevertheless we only experience intelligent thinking as an activity of individuals; and there is something impenetrably strange to us in the notion that the most intelligent man can be out-performed by the Idea of the animal as such.

We have given a brief sketch of some of the problems that are suggested by Plato's thought; we must turn to his successors. Of these Aristotle, at least the mature Aristotle, stands largely aside from the development we wish to explore; he rejected the notion of transcendent Forms, and redefined the soul as the form of the body, leaving it a directive function as controlling the body's development, and recognizing intelligence as the peak of human excellence, but locating superhuman intelligence in the moving principles of the heavenly bodies, and in a supreme directive intelligence who, we note, contemplates himself not only on the general ground of the identity of the mind with its object, but because the best mind must think that which is best, namely himself.[9]

Aristotle's contemporaries Speusippus and Xenocrates will have to be briefly dismissed; the programme that I have outlined allows us to by-pass two famous definitions of soul, as, ἰδέα τοῦ πάντη διαστατοῦ and as ἀριθμὸς ἑαυτὸν κινῶν. These, I take it, are primarily concerned with the cosmic soul of the *Timaeus*; but their application may well have been extended. Xenocrates identified Plato's ideal numbers with ordinary mathematical numbers; thus his definition identifies souls with at least one class of Ideas; and it becomes less paradoxical if we recall that ἀριθμός can easily denote any collection or structure that embodies a computable plurality, as the soul obviously does. It seems natural, then, to see Xenocrates as an important source for a view which certainly circulated among the Middle Platonists and which, discounting a mass of complications and objections, makes a straightforward identification of souls and Ideas.

In some ways, of course, this identification can be made extremely plausible. Suppose we see the Idea as a formal cause, then in the case of transient

[9] *Metaph.* Λ 9. 1075 a 5; 1074 b 34.

things, γενητά, it will operate over a period, and its influence will have a beginning. If I split a log into two parts, the Idea of twoness will come into play the moment the axe falls. But suppose, instead, that I beget a child; in this event part of his mother's body becomes informed by the Idea of humanity, or of a humanity; but also, the Platonist will believe, a soul enters this body from another realm. Are we to think that these are two distinct events which might occur at different times? I shall offer some evidence that there were Middle Platonists who drew no distinction.[10]

One source that must certainly be examined is Philo of Alexandria. So far as I can discover, he does not assimilate the words νοερός and νοητός. He knows the maxim that like is known by like (*Det.* 164) and argues from it that mind is known by mind (*Gig.* 9). Hence he concludes that we have intellectual knowledge of cosmic intelligences; but not, I think, that everything known to the mind is intelligent. Does he then assimilate souls with Ideas? I think I sense a certain hesitation, which is disguised by his habit of giving symbolical meaning to biblical texts. Thus when he states that Abraham and Sarah represent Ideas (*Qu. Gen.* 4. 8) we ought not to conclude that the Ideas resemble humans, and are conscious intelligences. There are texts which appear to link the Ideas with angels;[11] but most of these involve the terms λόγοι and δυνάμεις, which are too variable in meaning to support certain conclusions. Rather more definite is *Qu. Ex.* 2. 114, where Philo states that the patriarchs are immortalized as souls or Ideas; but so far I have discovered only one text which clearly states that Ideas are intelligent, at *Qu. Ex.* 2. 63, a passage which fortunately survives in a Greek fragment:

> Ἔδει γὰρ τὰς πρώτας τοῦ Ὄντος δυνάμεις, ἰδέας ἰδεῶν ὑπαρχούσας, τῆς καθαρωτάτης καὶ ἀμιγοῦς καὶ τιμαλφεστάτης καὶ προαιρετι τῆς ἐπιστημονικωτάτης φύσεως μεταλαχεῖν

Strictly speaking, of course, this applies to an élite class of Ideas; but it would be unlike Philo to provide that the common run of Ideas are excluded.

We can turn now to the Middle Platonist Calvenus Taurus, writing in the early second century AD, who states that 'souls are sent by the gods to earth (perhaps) in order that there may be as many living beings in the cosmos as there are in the intelligible realm'. 'Living beings' here should mean 'individual beings', because if it meant simply 'species', one human soul would suffice. Taurus' view resembles that found in Plotinus: when the souls are

[10] But not main-stream Platonists, for this possibility is ignored in the conspectus in Porphyry *ad Gaurum*; FT in Festugière, *Rev. Herm. Trism.* 3. 267–9.

[11] *Somn.* 1. 127; *Spec. Leg.* 1. 46–8, 329; *Qu. Gen.* 3. 11.

sent down, their place in heaven is not vacated, but remains occupied by their intelligible counterparts This view contrasts with one found in Philo, in the Gnostic teacher Basilides,[12] and in other Gnostic systems we shall now consider, which postulates a straightforward descent and reascension of souls or Ideas

Hippolytus describes a number of sects which expound a mixture of popular Platonism with unorthodox exposition of the Bible Ihe Peratae, we are told, conceive of the Son, or Logos as a cosmic serpent who glides up and down, and derives from the Father the δυνάμεις, ἰδέαι or χαρακτῆρες which he then embodies in matter (5 16 25) These must be individual ideas; for the account continues: 'If anyone has the strength to comprehend that he is a character of the Father brought down from above and embodied in the world, he becomes consubstantial with the Father in heaven and ascends to that place' Shortly afterwards we hear of the Logos 'carrying up from below those who have awakened and become characters of the Father' The Peratae, of course, were not the first to adopt the maxim 'Werde was du bist'

Very similar teaching appears in Hippolytus' account of the Docetists in Book VIII We hear of ideas or characters coming down from above, and being insulted by the Demiurge and imprisoned in material bodies, though not without some error (πλάνη) on their own part; thus 'the ideas are called souls, because they have cooled off from the things above and continue in darkness', using the word-play ψυχή, soul, ψυχρός, cold (8 10 1) The metaphor of cooling is also found in Origen (*Princ* 2 8 3, cf Mt 24:12; but he speaks, of νόες 'minds', or λογικοί, 'rational beings', rather than Ideas, which he interprets unsympathetically as mere mental concepts (*Princ* 2 3 6)

So much for the thinkers who assimilate Ideas with souls But there is a contrasting tradition at work within Middle Platonism which carries on the project begun by Plato in the *Sophist* and continued in the *Philebus* and *Politicus* to arrange the Ideas in a rational order, in which the more comprehensive take precedence over the more nearly individual This undertaking presumes that the Ideas are unchanging, and that each of them is a one-over-many, so that the table culminates in the most comprehensive and to our thinking the most abstract of all Ideas, namely that of being itself This diagram is known as the 'Tree of Porphyry', and examples are found in Aristotle and the Stoics, in Philo, Seneca, Albinus and Maximus of Tyre, and in Basil and Victorinus as well as Augustine.[13]

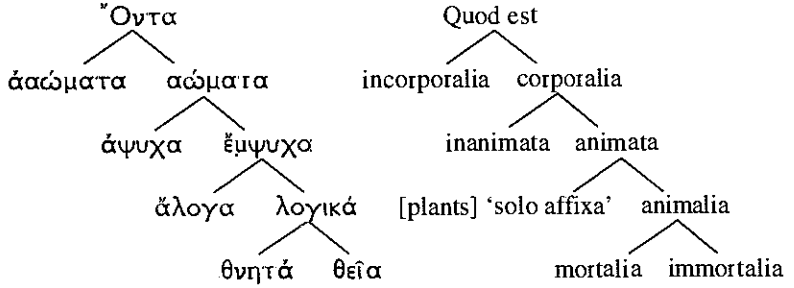
It should not be confused with another diagram, commonly known as a *scala naturae*, which attempts to classify the main types of being in an order

[12] Basilides (Hippolytus *Ref* 7 22 7ff) uses the term υἱότης (not in ISJ); ψυχή is implied at §10; ἰδέα perhaps only in a general sense 7 21 5

[13] W Theiler *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus* (Berlin, 1930), pp 3–7

THE PORPHYRY TREE

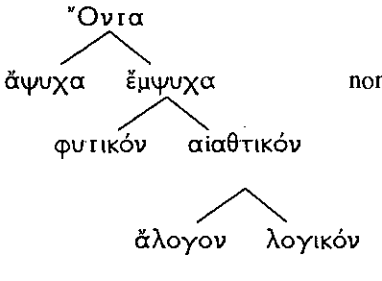
A full diagram is given by Philo *agr* 139, Seneca Ep 58:



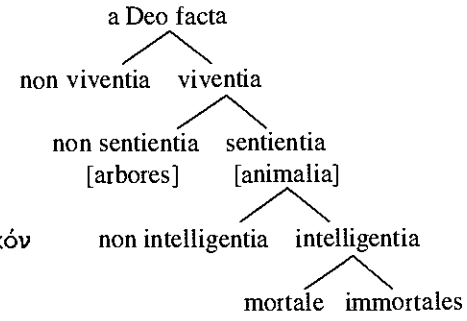
Stoic influence is seen in the primary division; the *incorporalia* comprise only grammatical and logical concepts, everything else is corporeal; so Philo *agr* 140f, whereas he normally makes God, the Logos and the Ideas incorporeal

The two following tables (a) omit this division, so giving more scope for incorporeal beings; (b) pronounce the right-hand classes superior at each stage, thereby giving the appearance of a *scala naturae*:

Maximus Tyrius 11 8, p 138 H



Augustine C D 11 16 1*



* In his enim, quae quoquo modo sunt et non sunt quod Deus est a quo facta sunt, praeponuntur viventia non viventibus et in his, quae vivunt, praeponuntur sentientia non sentientibus, sicut arboribus animalia; et in his quae sentiunt, praeponuntur intelligentia non intelligentibus, sicut homines pecoribus; et in his, quae intelligunt, praeponuntur immortalia mortalibus, sicut angeli hominibus

based on increasing value and rationality. Thus Aristotle divides the natural world into inanimates, plants, animals and rational beings; and attempts were later made to extend the scheme above the human level, though with much less prospect of securing agreement; it might, for instance, include demons and star-deities, as in Apuleius. Augustine, on Psalm 148, formulates it with convenient brevity thus: *angeli, homines, animalia, arbores et lapides laudunt Deum*. And a late and elaborately christianized version appears in the heavenly hierarchies of Dionysius the Areopagite.[14]

It should be clear that in theory these two classifications are quite distinct. The Porphyry Tree unfolds in an order of decreasing generality; the Ladder in an order of increasing value, taking rationality as the criterion, and comparing co-ordinate species or genera. In the Porphyry Tree the species man is placed next above the genus of animal-in-general, τὸ ζῷον, to which he belongs; in the other scheme man comes, next above *irrational* animals. But confusion arises because it is difficult to reflect on the Porphyry Tree without introducing some notion of comparative value. If we compare the species man with the genus animal, τὸ ζῷον, we are likely to think that man is superior; for the genus τὸ ζῷον defines a mixed population in which irrational animals predominate, whereas all men are presumed to be rational. Indeed we still import notions of value into our class-terms. There are good grounds for claiming that Thersites is a man no less than Achilles; but how natural it is to say that Achilles is more of a man than Thersites.

Let us approach the problem from another angle. The system of classification sketched out by Plato in the *Sophist* considers the ideas mainly as class-concepts. What will be the result if we emphasize the other aspects of the Ideas as mentioned above, and think of them as ideal or alternatively as formal causes?

Obviously there is no objection in principle to defining a class in terms of approximation to an ideal standard; we constantly do this when we describe everyday objects as circles or triangles. But if we do this, we cannot work with a simple concept of participation; we have to think of approximation in various degrees. And this will apply at all levels. Among the various species of animals, it is plausible to hold that the most rational is best, namely man; and among men, the best will be the man who most nearly approaches ideal humanity. But this means that there is no work to be found for the ideal animal-as-such; its role will be taken over by the ideal man.

Much the same argument applies if we think of the Ideas as formal causes. Aristotle was able to see the form of the species as playing an important part in the development of living organisms; it ensures, for instance, that a mare will give birth to a foal and not to a calf. But if it does this job, it will not

[14] Numerous examples are given by A. S. Pease, Commentary on Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*

need the assistance of the form of animal life, which might ensure, say, that a mare will not give birth to a mushroom. It does not seem to me that the ancient Platonists grasped this point; they held that the move from individual to species was a step up in terms of dignity and effectiveness, and assumed that the same would apply to the transition from species to genus, and so on. If I have argued correctly, this view was mistaken.

We can now turn to Marius Victorinus, whom I see as a pagan philosopher turned Christian, who defends Nicene theology with the simple conviction of a convert, but is still searching for a philosophical substructure in the Neoplatonist doctrines which he has absorbed, and is far from establishing a coherent system. In his first philosophical work, the *ad Candidum*, he explains in some detail that *intelligibilis* and *intellectualis* apply to different orders of reality; he may therefore be the dissident whom Augustine indicates by the tactful plural *quidam*.[15] There are, he declares, four orders of reality: *quae vere sunt, quae sunt, quae non vere non sunt, quae non sunt*.[16] To get the priorities right we have to read the third clause with a cancelling double negative: 'things that are not absolutely unreal'. And even the fourth class turns out to have some measure of being; it is distinguished from *quae vere non sunt*, which he says 'have no claim to exist' *ad id ut sint locum non habent*.

The four classes can be identified as follows: first, Ideas or intelligibles, secondly souls, which are *intellectualis*, thirdly souls embedded in matter, and fourthly matter itself. In this passage, then, *intellectualis* refers to a power of understanding which may or may not be exercised; indeed we hear of *animarum in natura intellectualium nondum intellectum habentium*. But there is no consistency; shortly afterwards the power of God is called *intellectualis* as well as *intelligibilis*; and since God is *simplex*, this cannot denote a lesser perfection, let alone an imperfection.

Turning to the broader question, we find that Victorinus gives a confused impression of the intelligible world, largely, I think, because he has not appreciated the fundamental distinction between the Tree and the Ladder to which I referred. He is familiar enough with a christianized version of the *scala naturae*; a simple example, given in descending order of value, runs as follows: Deus, Iesus, Spiritus, *nous*, anima, et deinde corporalia omnia (*adv. Ar.* 1.2,5). A rather similar passage (ibid. 1.44) enlarges on the orders of angels in language drawn from Eph. 1:21 and Col. 1:16: and a third exam-pie (1.60) begins with the Father and the Son, as mutually indwelling, but continues in philosophical terms, omitting the Spirit and reverting to the four orders of reality mentioned above: God is *praeprincipium omnis substantiae*,

[15] See however A. H. Armstrong (ed.), *Later Greek Philosophy* 297f. on Iamblichus.

[16] See F. W. Kohnke, 'Plato's Conception of τὸ οὐκ ὄντως οὐκ ὄν'. *Phronesis* (1956) 2.32–40.

intelligibilis et intellectualis et animae et hylicae et universae substantiae in hyle

Victorinus has previously[17] explained the highest of these four orders, the things *quae vere sunt et omnia supracaelestia* He begins, apparently, with its less distinguished members: ut spiritus, νοῦς, *anima, cognoscentia, disciplina, virtutes*, λόγοι, *opiniones, perfectio, existentia, vita, intelligentia* This is a perplexing catalogue; one would say, surely, that *spiritus*, νοῦς, and *anima* claim to be substances, while the next six look more like attributes or activities which they are supposed to display (and it seems odd to find *opiniones* in such distinguished company); whereas *existentia, vita* and *intelligentia* are nominalized forms of the familiar triad *esse, vivere, intelligere*, which can either be sharply distinguished, as marking off three orders of creatures by their highest potential – perhaps stones, plants and men – or identified as belonging to the supreme being and presupposing one another

We have taxed Victorinus with confusing the categories; so perhaps we should hear his reply, which conveys standard Neoplatonic doctrine, but has a certain vividness and poetic appeal; he contends that in the intelligible world, everything that exists in a substance, and is a living and thinking being: *Etenim in supernis aeternisque, id est in intellectibilibus atque intellectualibus nihil accidens, nihil qualitas, nihil geminum, vel cum altero, sed omnia viventes sunt intelligentesque substantiae, purae, simplices, unius modi, hoc ipso quo sunt, et vivunt et intellegunt, conversimque, quo vivunt, quo intellegunt, hoc ipso etiam sunt* [18] His conclusion, I think, is rather less impressive: *Vivit igitur ac vita una substantia est* This to make time a mere negation of enduring life rather than as a stage in which to act

But I have not finished with Victorinus' catalogue He goes on to mention two higher sorts of reality: *et adhuc superius, existentialitas, vitalitas, intelligentitas, et supra ista omnia,* ὄν *solum istud ipsum quod est unum et solum* ὄν But what on earth is the place of these abstracta, 'existentiality, vitality and intelligentity' as distinct from 'existence, life and intelligence', in a scheme of being which, we have just heard, begins with the Holy Trinity and continues with νοῦς and anima and the divine creations?

I suggest that Victorinus has been misled by a faulty theory of meaning He assumes that all nouns are names; he considers *existentia* and *existentialitas* two distinct significant words, and infers that they denote two separate things In this reasoning he overlooks the vital fact that *existentia* itself has more than one meaning It can have a collective sense, indicating all that exists, or some part of it It can also be used abstractly, to indicate the state or condition which existent things as such possess But in this second sense it seems precisely equivalent to *existentialitas*; the longer term might perhaps

[17] *Ad Cand* 7.
[18] *Adv Ar* 4 2

be useful as excluding an ambiguity which *existentia* permits; but that gives no reason to construe it as a name for a distinct and higher order of reality

One might of course argue that *existentialitas* conveys a more pronounced suggestion of abstraction; it seems further removed from the concrete and particular, and so, on Platonic assumptions, more sublime But if so, why stop there? Why not speak of *existentialitas* as something higher still? – Irenaeus long ago had castigated charlatans who played this game Meanwhile, let us note that *existentialitas* is something of a bogus universal; it does not, like most universals, have the dignity of greater comprehensiveness, as the genus animal is more comprehensive than the species man; for existentiality, if it is a property at all, is a property which can attach only to existence

This argument could be extended, if time allowed, to include Victorinus' treatment of God himself Sometimes he uses concrete terms borrowed from everyday life; he is particularly fond of describing God's substance as *spiritus* and *lumen*; or again, unlike Plotinus, as a thinking mind that is conscious of itself At other times he accumulates abstracta; God is not only ὄν, but πρoόν; or more elaborately, *omnium principiorum praeprincipium, omnium intelligentiarum praeintelligentia*, and so on [19] I would venture to argue that even the well-tried description of God as *esse purum* harbours confusions It appeals to *esse* as the most abstract of universals, having the least positive significance, to express the transcendence of God, or his remoteness from ordinary descriptions Yet at the same time *esse* must express his creativity; and here one appeals to the infinite variety of positive content, when *esse* can stand for the distinctive manner of life and existence possessed by so many different kinds of created beings But this is a radically different use of *esse*; the distinctive *esse* of the hyena may perhaps be seen as a product of God's creative intelligence, but it is not in any sense an aspect of his nature Yet this apparently sensible caution is ruled out by the traditional reasoning that God is a perfectly simple being, so that all aspects of his *esse* must coincide This argument is not for me

We turn at last to Augustine, who like Victorinus attempts a synthesis of Platonism with Nicene Christianity, and whose notions of the intelligible world have much in common with his Augustine is by far the more versatile and penetrating thinker He is not captivated by Neoplatonist systematics; he has absorbed the Christian doctrine of creation, including the biblical view that 'God created man from the dust of the earth', and of course the earth itself He therefore sees God as creating beings quite unlike himself, as well as those who can achieve some likeness through their intelligence and their independence of matter He can, therefore, accommodate intellectual spirits

[19] Ibid 1 49

in the Platonic style; but he has no special reason to see the supreme Unity founding a series of intelligent beings who diminish only gradually from himself. This I think needs saying; for scholarly research has tended to call attention to the echoes of Plotinus in Augustine. His independence, therefore, also needs to be stressed.

It seems, then, that he approaches the intelligible world by three different routes. First, it contains the patterns or prototypes of all created beings. Next, it contains all those concepts and relations of which we have intellectual knowledge; these are more various then we might expect, and figure in mathematical, logical, moral and aesthetic theory. Thirdly it has to include those concepts that can be predicated *per analogiam* of God himself, and in soon sense identified with him.

The first heading can be simply treated. In the *Diverse Questions*, number 46, Augustine has a straightforward Platonist account of the *rationes rerum stabiles atque incommutabiles, quae in divina intelligentia continentur*. He does not, in this passage, assign them to the divine Wisdom or Logos in particular; and he does not, I believe, include ideas of individual beings, though this has sometimes been asserted.[20] And there is no suggestion that I can discover that the Ideas are intelligent beings. The pure and rational mind, he says, excels by its intelligence *istas rationes, quarum visione fit beatissima*; and the treatise *On Free Will* describes the Forms of bodies at least as inferior to the powers of the soul, which in turn are inferior to the virtues themselves.[21] Thus the value of those Forms in proportional, not to the divine intelligence that conceives them, but to the degree of goodness which the Creator intends them to realize in their embodiments. And the *rationes* that inspire the intelligent mind are not themselves described as intelligent.

Secondly, the intelligible world includes all those things that are known by the mind; though no doubt we should add the qualification 'without the aid of the senses', for we must not encumber the intelligible world with the road to Larissa. Within this wide-ranging class we can identify Forms of substances, for corporeal Forms appear again under this heading;[22] of qualities, especially moral qualities; and of relations, for 'likeness' is mentioned in *ver. relig.* 36.66, along with unity and truth. Here again, so far as I can see, there is no mention of individual Forms, and no claim that the Forms are intelligent, thinking beings. Certainly there is no tendency to assimilate the Forms with souls; for even the angels are conceived as created beings, and in principle subject to change, though capable of achieving immutability in virtue.

But this sketch of Augustine's views has so far been one-sided. In a well-known passage of the *City of God*, 8.6, he represents the Platonists as teaching that 'whatever exists is either matter or life, and that life is superior to matter, that the Form of matter' – surprisingly[23] – 'is accessible to sense, that the Form of life is accessible to intelligence'. 'Life' is clearly to be taken in an inclusive sense, for Augustine has just declared that its ideal Form is realized in the divine intelligence. And he goes on to explain intellectual knowledge by considering three kinds of beauty, the physical, the conceptual and the ideal beauty, the last being raised above the level of our intellect through its unchanging perfection. An even more spectacular description of intellectual knowledge is found in the *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, 12.24.50, where he sees it apprehending the Christian virtues enumerated by St Paul: 'How else can the intellect itself be seen except by intellection? In this way also we see "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control" and the rest, by which we draw near to God, and finally God himself'.

In this bold synthesis of Platonic and Christian tradition it appears that there are philosophical puzzles which I have neither the time nor the skill to disentangle. Augustine can readily accept the Platonic Forms of man and horse, existing in the divine mind as prototypes of things to be created. But there seems no place in his thought for the Form of the living creature as such; he speaks rather of life itself; and this is not part of God's design for creation, but an aspect of his own being, included in the triad *esse-vivere-intelligere* which, like Victorinus, he can declare to be inseparable one from another, as essential aspects of God's own being.[24] In much the same way the notion of perfect intelligence appears, especially in the *Soliloquies*, to merge with that of perfect truth, an echo, perhaps, of the claimed identity of the knowing mind with its object; and there is not very lucid transition from truth at its lowest, as seen in the truism that three threes are nine, or that wise men are better than fools, to truth as realised in perfect understanding and intelligence, a truth identical with the being of God.

When approaching God's being in philosophical terms, Augustine puts him at the summit of the intelligible world. As an ardent Nicene, Augustine could not accept the formula found in some earlier Christian Platonists, that God the Father creates pure being. God the Son confers on things their distinctive character: for uncharacterised existence is a logician's phrase: nothing can exist unless it is so-and-so. Thus when Augustine speaks of *esse purum*, he cannot refer to such existence; cf. p. 11. It may perhaps be

[20] J. Meyendorff, *New Scholasticism* 16 (1942) 36; V.J. Bourke, *Augustine's View of Reality* 5 n. 21.

[21] 2.19.50; cf. C.D. 8.6.

[22] Op. cit. 2.19.49.

[23] C.D. 8.6. D. Knowles translates *speciem corporis* as 'the form of matter' and the meaning 'Form' is indeed suggested earlier in the chapter. Physical beauty' seems less likely as Augustine goes on to refer to beauty as *pulchritudo*. But *species* could have a very general sense, contrasting the corporeal 'order' or 'realm' with the intelligible.

[24] Ibid. Cf. Victorinus *adv. Ar.* 3.6 *ad fin.*

approached in terms of Aristotle's metaphysics God has no accidents, in the commonly accepted sense; he is never surprised by events To say 'God is perfect justice' perhaps expressed this point But Augustine interprets this 'is' as an 'is' of identity, so reaching the conclusion that all God's attributes are identical with him, and thus identical with one another It is difficult to make sense of this doctrine It may be possible, for instance, to conceive a perfect union of justice and mercy; but a synthesis of all God's attributes must escape human comprehension And even if it were possible, such a scheme might do justice to God's majesty, but could not comprehend his love This must be infinitely adaptable if, as we believe, God loves both the severe moralist and the warm-hearted undiscriminating open heart which has a welcome for all He loves us, not merely for our likeness to him, but in our inevitable difference, as created beings

Augustine, therefore, has not succeeded in presenting an integrated version of Platonic metaphysics, Nevertheless his services to philosophical theology are very great Despite his evident indebtedness to Platonism, he has presented a much more credible version of divine unity, and of God's action in the world For all his debt to Plotinus (well recorded in Henry Chadwick's notes to his translation of the *Confessions*) Augustine is worlds away from a system in which the unity of the supreme One excludes all multiplicity, to the extent that such a being in his own person cannot either know or be known, and his action on the world is an eternal dispersal and dissipation of the original unity; where there is indeed a contrary tendency to return to the One, but a return which promises nothing but Nirvana Augustine, again, has quietly avoided the glorification of abstract concepts which entangled Victorinus And it should never be forgotten that his philosophical work, important as it is, occupied only a fraction of his time and energy Augustine was tirelessly active as a preacher, as an exponent of the Scriptures, as a pastor, as a diocesan administrator, and not least as an expositor of Christian orthodoxy as he conceived it, with which his philosophy must not conflict No other man has exercised so great an influence on the thought and action of the succeeding millennium

XVII

Augustine's Universe

(read at Oxford on 22nd May, 1987
to a group entitled 'The Theological Wine')

St Augustine is beyond question the greatest mind and the rarest spirit of late antiquity; capable both of calming our inquietudes by the profound assurance of his faith and of whetting our curiosity by the penetrating ingenuities of his reasoning; no subject he touches can fail to interest his many admirers But there is hardly a subject, it must be said, in which Augustine himself professed so plain a disinterest as the structure of the physical world; a disinterest, however, which brings some advantage

The student of Augustine is too often bewildered by the horrifying industry of his fellows But the enormous bulk of Augustine literature has seldom attempted to describe in simple terms the form which the cosmos assumed in the saint's imagination It may be that scholars have followed their master in thinking this a matter of little moment Here, then, it seems, we have a subject on which, without enormous efforts of mental abstraction or relentless pursuit of insignificant detail, some new light can be thrown

I spoke of disinterest It is easy to show that Augustine has – or affects to have – no interest in cosmology for its own sake 'It is frequently asked', he writes, 'what our belief must be about the form and shape of the heaven according to Sacred Scripture Many scholars engage in lengthy discussions on these matters; but the sacred writers with their deeper wisdom have omitted them Such subjects are of no profit for those who seek beatitude, and, what is worse, they take up very precious time that ought to be given to what is spiritually beneficial What concern is it of mine whether heaven is like a sphere and the earth enclosed by it and suspended in the middle of the universe, or whether it is like a disk above the earth, covering it over on one side?'[1]

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[1] *Gen ad Lit* 2 9 20 All references are to this work, unless otherwise noted I am greatly indebted to the admirable translation by J.H Taylor S J (Ancient Christian Writers 41–2) which I have used with only minor changes It has some enterprising but unobjectionable, expansions of Augustine's Latin

'But' he goes on, 'the credibility of Scripture is at stake'; and in a previous passage he explains why a Christian teacher ought to be grounded in the rudiments of this apparently frivolous pursuit. 'Usually, even a non-Christian knows something about the earth, the heavens, and the other elements of this world . . about the predictable eclipses of the sun and moon about the kinds of animals, plants, minerals and so forth, and this knowledge he holds to as being certain from reason and experience. Now it is a disgraceful and dangerous thing for an individual to hear a Christian, while ostensibly giving the meaning of Holy Scripture, talk nonsense on these topics; and we should take all means to prevent such an embarrassing situation, in which people show up enormous ignorance in a Christian and laugh it to scorn . . If they find a Christian mistaken in a field which they themselves know well, and hear him basing his foolish opinions on our books, how are they going to believe those books in matters concerning the resurrection of the dead, the hope of eternal life and the kingdom of heaven . . ? Reckless and incompetent expounders of Holy Scripture bring untold trouble and sorrow on their wiser brethren when they are detected in one of their mischievous fallacies and are taken to task by those who do not accept the authority of our sacred writings.'[2]

This extremely prudent and sensible warning might perhaps suggest that Augustine accords to the natural reason an authority comparable to that of Scripture – a notion which would be pleasing to literal-minded empiricists. But on the whole this notion is delusive. Augustine will make great efforts to dispel apparent conflicts between Scripture and science; but if no solution can be found, the inerrancy of Holy Scripture is the rock on which he stands. In his *Literal Exposition of Genesis* he protests against the complaint that he has involved himself too deeply in matters of no spiritual importance. He replies, in effect, that with practice it becomes easy to refute the unbeliever. 'When they are able, from reliable evidence, to prove some fact of physical science, we shall show that it is not contrary to our Scripture. But when they produce from their books a theory contrary to Scripture, and therefore contrary to the Catholic Faith, either we shall have some ability to demonstrate that it is absolutely false, *or at least we ourselves hold it so without any shadow of doubt*. And so will we cling to our Mediator, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.'[3]

I would not maintain, however, that Augustine is wholly consistent. For all his brilliance and original genius, he is prone to make use of customary themes, or *topoi*, many of which were adapted by Christian tradition from earlier pagan thought. We can trace back to Epicurus the notion that physical research is a waste of effort unless it brings the spiritual benefit of removing

[2] 1 19 39

[3] 1 21 41. My italics

anxieties. But there is the countervailing theme that the exercise of human reason is of its very nature a noble task, a theme that was voiced in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and was eloquently developed by Sophocles.[4] Augustine therefore has no difficulty in adopting from Tertullian or Basil the well-worn argument that the dissensions of the philosophers demonstrate the futility of their studies; but he can also write with approval of the astronomers and their work; 'for they investigate these matters by the natural light of the mind which Thou hast given them, and discover many secrets; they predict many years in advance the eclipses of the sun and of the moon, and the events accord with their predictions; they have even set down rules which can still be read, by which one can make [such] forecasts; and it comes to pass as it was foretold'[5]

Augustine had evidently given thought to cosmology as a young man interested in acquiring a general education; and he emphasised the reliability of its sober-minded exponents, contrasting it with the extravagant fables of the Manichees, to whose company he was later attracted. His tolerance, of course, does not extend to the astrologers, whom like almost all the Fathers he denounces. Some events, no doubt, can be rationally predicted; but the astrologers assume a total determinism which abrogates human free will, and thereby makes moral judgments absurd and moral conduct impossible.

In his treatment of the Scriptures Augustine is of course far removed from the modern critic who thinks of a collection of books originally written by a number of authors of different mentalities at different times. He assumes, if not unity of authorship, at least a common mind and agreement of teaching. And he is right to this extent, that the cosmology of the many different biblical writers is not remarkably dissimilar, just as it was not strenuously thought out. But it does, of course, differ profoundly from the much more sophisticated theories of the Greek philosophers. Augustine therefore has a problem on his hands whose full extent he could not perceive, partly because he was unable to study the Old Testament writers in their Hebrew original; for the translators had already gone some way towards obscuring the more archaic features of biblical thought. As a sample, we may take the Hebrew assumption that light is an effect which comes and goes without the need for a source of light – as might be supposed by a child brought up on the fog-bound coasts of Newfoundland. Light thus existed before the sun and stars, which were created only to serve as indicators. Augustine, as we shall see, can evade the drawbacks of this crude assumption; but only by appealing to the Greek usage which could understand the word 'light' in terms of discovered truth or mental illumination.

Hebrew cosmology can be found in various books of the Bible; in the

[4] P.V. 436–71; *Antigone* 332–75

[5] *Confessions* 5 3 4.

second Isaiah, in the Wisdom literature, in some of the Psalms; but it is of course the opening chapters of Genesis that provide the richest evidence and pose the most awkward problems. Augustine himself devoted three separate commentaries to the beginning of Genesis, of which I have already drawn upon the most extensive, the *Literal Exposition*; and there are important discussions of particular points both in the *Confessions* and in the *City of God*. The problems presented by Genesis to a literalist expositor do not form part of my subject, on a perfectly strict definition; but I will mention them briefly, to give some notion of the scriptural constraints which bear on Augustine's thinking. Rather than follow the purely logical order, I will begin with the point most familiar to ourselves.

To the modern reader it is clear enough that we have two accounts of the creation, of which the second, beginning at Genesis 2:4, is plainly the more primitive; it has been well observed that Genesis 1 stems from Mesopotamia, where the first requisite for ordered life is to gain control of the flood-waters, while Genesis 2:4ff reflects the experience of the desert-dweller, for whom nothing will grow until it begins to rain. Augustine observes the duplication when dealing with 2:7, which gives a second account of the creation of man. 'We must see', he says, 'whether this is a restatement intended to describe the manner in which man was made; for we have read already that he was made on the sixth day'.[6] He decides against this view, for he has already concluded that the first creation account does not describe an operation spread out over six actual days, appealing to the text of Ecclus. 18:1, 'He created all things together'; whereas in Genesis 2 the man gives names to the animals and to the woman, and (says Augustine) 'whatever syllables were used in speaking these words, no two syllables of the utterance could have sounded together'.[7] In short, this second account records events which need time for their completion. But in any case it could not have been a mere continuation of the first account, since Genesis 2:1 declares that God had finished his work.

The problem of the two creation accounts was of course a long-standing puzzle. Philo of Alexandria had solved it in Platonic terms, making Genesis 1 describe the creation of the ideal forms of things, which were later to be embodied in physical realities. But this solution is not available to Augustine, in whose view the ideal forms could not be created, since they must inhere in the eternal Wisdom of God. His solution is to invoke a Stoic conception; Genesis 1 describes the creation, not of things themselves, but of their animating principles or 'seminal reasons'; whereas 'the work whereby man was formed from the slime of the earth and a wife was fashioned for him from his side belongs not to that creation by which all things were made "together"

[6] 6.11.
[7] 6.3.4.

but to that work of God which takes place with the unfolding of the ages as He works even now'.[8]

A second problem has been touched on already. How can we reconcile the narrative of a creation in six days with the doctrine that God's will to create needs no time at all for its execution? Augustine, we saw, quoted Ecclesiasticus to this effect; more familiar to us is Psalm 33:9, 'He spake and it was done; he commanded and it stood fast'. Instantaneous creation, I believe, also figures in the early Greek tradition; intended, no doubt, as a reply to objections against crudely conceived creation theories which pictured God at work in the manner of a carpenter or a potter.[9] Augustine here simply develops a position already sketched by Philo; God has no need of six separate days in which to complete his work, but our minds cannot follow the process unless it is exhibited to us in distinct stages. This resembles the arguments used by Platonists to suggest that the creation narrative in Plato's *Timaeus* does not really contradict the view that the world has existed for ever. But Augustine supplements his argument by a fanciful and, to my mind, unneeded explanation of the words 'evening' and 'morning' by which the six days are defined. These cannot be successive events; they refer, instead, to two manners in which the angels contemplate the works of their Creator. They can intuit either the prototypes which inhere in the divine Word, or their earthly counterparts. Thus 'there is a vast difference between knowledge of a thing in the Word of God and knowledge of the same thing in itself. The first kind of knowledge can be compared to day; the second kind, to evening'. 'This knowledge, being of a lower order, is rightly designated by the term evening'.[10] I do not find it easy to like this bold and imaginative exegesis; it implies that the execution of God's designs is inferior to the designs themselves. Either, then, the designs were impractical, or the execution was defective. But possibly the difficulty is one that attaches to all creation doctrines; for a God who is *ex hypothesi* unequalled cannot give rise to creatures whose dignity matches his own.

Thirdly of course there is the problem of the first three days of creation, which are taken for granted as existing before the heavenly bodies were made to define them; and the related problem that God began his work by saying 'Let there be light'. 'Why, then', says Augustine, 'was the sun made to rule the day and shine upon the earth if that other light was sufficient to make the day? Did that light illumine . . . only the higher regions far from the earth so that a sun was needed [for] the lower regions?'[11] Or did the sun, when it was created, merely increase the brightness of the day? Augustine does not

[8] 6.3.4.
[9] Cicero *Nat. Deor.* 1.9.22.
[10] 4.23.40; 4.22.39.
[11] 1.11.23.

answer this question, but passes on to a still more awkward problem; if God began his creative work by saying 'Let there be light', what sort of restraint could obstruct it and so give rise to an alternation of day and night? He suggests, though not very confidently, that perhaps the primeval light was localized and actually travelled round the unformed earth: 'Although water still covered all the earth, there was nothing to prevent the watery sphere from having day on one side by the presence of light, and on the other side night by its absence Thus in the evening, darkness would pass to that side which the light was vacating by turning to the other '[12] The obvious objection to this view is that it makes the primeval light behave so exactly like the sun that one cannot see why the sun is needed to replace it Moreover it makes nonsense of the view that the succession of days is merely a teaching device to exhibit the complexity of what is really an instantaneous act Augustine himself does not seem to have been satisfied by his suggestions; in the end he falls back on the view that the primeval light must have been the spiritual illumination enjoyed by the angels, with the alternation of higher and lower knowledge which we have already described He does, however, allude to an alternative view put out by St Basil, who writes as follows: 'Ever since the creation of the sun there is day, namely the air illuminated by the sun when it shines in the hemisphere above the earth; and night, the shadow cast on the earth when the sun is hidden But in the beginning it was not the sun's movement, but the diffusion of that primeval light, and its ensuing withdrawal at the moment God appointed, which made the day come and the night succeed it' [13] Augustine himself refers to the theory that light is illuminated air,[14] derived perhaps from Aristotle, who holds that light is an activity of transparent media, like air or water;[15] but it may have formed part of a scholarly attempt to rehabilitate the biblical notion of light as an effect which needs no particular source; Basil could have taken it from the lost Commentary on Genesis by Origen, and Origen, as we know, discussed the Scriptures with learned Jewish rabbis But there is an alternative possibility, which I will explain in due course

Augustine's criticism of Basil is brief and perfunctory; perhaps he did not fully understand his colleague's proposal But the passage is worth quoting, since it leads us on from the theory of light to the theory of human vision 'No analogy can be offered', he writes, 'to prove such a diffusion and contraction of the light as would account for the succession of day and night The shaft of rays from our eyes, to be sure, is a shaft of light It can be pulled in when we focus on what is near to our eyes, and extended when we fix on

[12] 1.12 25.
[13] *Hex* 2.8 Migne P G 29, 48 BC
[14] 8 12 26
[15] *De Anima* 2 7, 418b 3 ff ; cf Didymus on Genesis 1 8; *Sources chrétiennes* 233 p 68, 19–21

objects at a distance But when it is pulled in, it does not altogether stop seeing distant objects, although of course it sees them more obscurely than when it focusses its gaze upon them Nevertheless the light which is in the eye, according to authoritative opinion, is so slight that without the help of light from outside we should not be able to see anything Moreover, since it cannot be distinguished from the outside light, it is difficult, as I have said, to find an analogy to prove a diffusion of light to make the day and a contraction to make the night '[16]

This passage calls for explanation Ancient theories of vision were often dominated by the axiom that like is known by like On this assumption, the eye sees because it is bright; and the theory developed by Plato[17] suggests that the eye is the source of a 'visual ray', that is, of a stream of light directed towards the object it seeks to discern But it cannot do its work unaided; vision is achieved only when the ray from our eye meets with more powerful rays of light which proceed from the object in view Plato's theory succeeds, though rather clumsily, in meeting an obvious objection to the theory of visual rays Since *ex hypothesi* they are luminous and resemble the light they apprehend, why do we not see these rays of light shooting out from other people's eyes, even if understandably we cannot perceive our own? The answer – a rather feeble and face-saving answer as I think – is that the rays are in fact luminous, but too faint to be ordinarily visible; we see by means of them, but we do not see them

Augustine has evidently adopted the Platonic theory; but unless I am mistaken, there are traces also of a totally different theory of light and vision deriving from the Stoics The Stoics, or some of them, regarded rays of light, not as an outgoing stream, but as a sort of tentacle, a static extension of the luminous object, which is at once retracted when a cloud or solid body blocks the direct path to earth [18] (It has to be retracted, of course, because we never come across detached fragments of sunbeam glowing among the flowerbeds) This Stoic theory is mentioned by Marcus Aurelius, and seems to be vaguely familiar to several Christian writers, who remark that the divine Logos is indeed related to the Father as the sun's radiance is to the sun; but we must not think of a radiance which is put forth and withdrawn; the Logos exists eternally [19] But the Stoics, like the Platonists, appear to have drawn a parallel between illumination and vision; for we learn of a really bizarre theory, by which the eye is said to compress the adjacent air and make of it a kind of antenna, so that we feel for the distant object as if with a stick [20] For

[16] 1.16 31
[17] *Timaeus* 45b–46c
[18] See my *Divine Substance* (Oxford 1977) p 196 adding *Letter to Rheginus* p 45 36–8 (ed M L Peel p 31)
[19] Epiphanius. *haer* 62.1 8.
[20] *Stoic Vet Frag* 2.865–7

all its crudity, this theory does offer some sort of account of our ability to focus our eyes at varying distances; and I think Augustine probably has this theory in mind when he talks of the diffusion and contraction of light But it is also probable that he has misunderstood St Basil There is no suggestion of Stoic doctrine in Basil's Second Homily; more probably the Hebrew notion of light has somehow come down to him Basil was no great scientist; but he was surely acute enough to see the absurdity of trying to explain darkness in terms of unfocussed vision

Augustine's account of sight has the special interest that it implies an instantaneous process within which, nevertheless, one can establish an order of priorities; and he himself compares it with creation, understood as an instantaneous act which can nevertheless be described as a set of successive stages Thus 'when we look at the sun rising, it is evident that our gaze could not reach it without passing over the whole expanse of earth and sky that lies between' Our sight, he explains, has to pass through the air spread out over various lands and above the enormous ocean on its way to the sun Yet 'if we close our eyes and turn towards the sun there will seem to be no lapse of time between the moment we open our eyes and the moment our gaze meets its object Now this is certainly a ray of material light that shines forth from our eyes and touches objects so remote with a speed that cannot be calculated or equalled It is clear that all those measureless spaces are traversed at one time in a single glance; yet it is no less evident what part of these spaces is penetrated first and what part later '[21]

So much for our vision Now, what does it disclose? 'Heaven and earth', we might answer in brief But what is their form, and what is the substance of which they are made? Augustine, we noted, has airily dismissed all enquiries into the form or shape of heaven; but in the immediate sequel he has to admit that the problem needs discussion For the Scripture itself, at least in its Latin version, makes two conflicting impressions; Isaiah 40:22 describes God suspending the heavens like a vault, whereas the 104th Psalm has him stretch them out like a skin Augustine perhaps conceives the 'skin' – and rightly – as the flattened roof of a rectangular tent, which in practice of course would be slightly concave 'For what can be so different and contradictory as a skin stretched out flat', he says, 'and the curved shape of a vault?' He goes on to say that the picture of heaven as a vault does not contradict the view that heaven is a sphere; Scripture simply meant to describe that part which is over our heads 'If, therefore, it is not a sphere, it is a vault where it covers the earth; but if it is a sphere, it is a vault all round ' But the text comparing it to a skin is much more puzzling Augustine's answer is that 'If a vault can not only be curved but be also flat, a skin can surely be stretched out not only on a flat plane but in the form of a sphere Thus for instance a leather bottle and

[21] 4 34 54

an inflated ball are both made of skin '[22] I am afraid this looks more like an attempt to save the consistency of Scripture than to follow the writer's intention; but it is fairly evident that in practice Augustine declares for a spherical heaven

He also accepts that the earth is a sphere, though without pushing this opinion; no doubt he was unwilling to provoke a controversy on such a point, since his view was by no means universal among Christians Lactantius had declared that the earth is flat; and the literalist expositors of the Antiochene school thought it rectangular, no doubt inferring this from biblical texts about the four corners of the earth; and the same picture reappears in the *Christian Topography* of Cosmas Indicopleustes Augustine's opinion leaks out, so to speak, in a passing reference to 'the massive watery sphere' of the primeval earth, or the 'globe of tempestuous air' that surrounds it; or indeed from his remark that 'for the whole twenty-four hours of the sun's circuit there is always day in one place and night in another'.[23] It can also be inferred from his discussion of the Antipodes in the *City of God*.[24] He cannot believe that these people exist, since (assuming the torrid zone to be uninhabited) this would divide the human race into two disconnected halves But any belief that the earth was flat would dispose of the Antipodes at once, for it necessitates an absolute up and down for falling bodies; the Antipodes would simply fall off the underside of the earth – unless, indeed, they had sticky feet, like the flies that walk on our ceilings; and they would need six feet, or five at the least, if they were to conduct their affairs with tolerable convenience I am not quoting Augustine here; but I offer this as a fair parody of his style of argument

Augustine's views on the substance of the earth are fairly conventional He accepts the theory of four elements, earth, air, fire and water, each constituted by the imposition of a pair of qualities on a primary indeterminate matter; thus earth is cold and dry, whereas water is cold and wet, and so on By reason of the qualities they share, the elements can be transformed one into another The heavier elements tend to fall towards the centre of the universe, the earth, whereas the lighter ones tend to move upwards and outwards He describes a conflict between the tendencies of air and water in a passage which seems to recall his early scientific studies:[25] 'A jar placed upside down into water cannot fill up, thus clearly showing that air by its nature seeks a higher place The jar seems to be empty, but it is obvious that it is full of air Then finding no outlet in the higher part of the vessel, and being unable by its nature to break through the waters below the air fills all the

[22] 2 9 21–2
[23] 1 12 25; 2 13 27; 1 10 21
[24] *City of God* 16 9
[25] 2 2 5

vessel, withstands the water and does not allow it to enter But place the jar so that the mouth is not downwards but to the side, and the water will flow in below while the air escapes above.'

This theory of natural places – where we would think of specific gravity – leads to some difficulties in dealing with a text like Psalm 136:6, 'He established the earth above the waters', and even more with Genesis 1:6, 'God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters ' We will come to the firmament presently; meanwhile there is time for a word on the heavenly bodies which circulate in the space between earth and heaven On this subject Augustine is usually content to speak at second hand and quote the opinions of others. He has a certain amount of sound astronomical knowledge He does not decide for certain whether the moon provides its own light or whether it reflects that of the sun; but on either supposition he can give a correct account of its phases On the former view, the moon is particoloured and, as he says 'is always full' – viz from some point of view – 'though it does not always appear so to people on earth'. But if it shines by reflected light, then 'when it is near the sun it can only appear in the shape of a horn, because the rest of it, which is fully illumined, is not facing the earth so as to be seen from here.'[26]

On the other hand Augustine apparently does not know, or fails to appreciate, the mathematical methods by which astronomers tried to calculate the relative sizes and distances of the sun and other luminaries One interesting passage[27] refers to a view that perhaps all the heavenly bodies 'are in themselves equally bright, on the supposition that their unequal distances from the earth may cause them to appear with greater or less brilliance to our eyes ' The advocates of this theory no doubt treated the moon as an exception, holding that it is not self-luminous; but 'concerning the stars', says Augustine, 'they go so far as to maintain that many of them are the size of the sun, or even larger, but that they appear small because of their greater distance ' This view, we may note, was still maintained by Sir William Herschel at the end of the eighteenth century. It has two remarkable implications, though it is hardly probable that Augustine discerned them. First, the so-called 'fixed stars' would then be at enormously different distances from the earth, to account for their differing brightness, as opposed to the conventional view which saw them as uniformly disposed on the outermost sphere of the heavens. Secondly, on any reasonable computation of the sun's distance, the universe would have to be very much larger than any magnitude commonly assigned to it.

But a quite different picture is given by a bizarre piece of argumentation which Augustine reports without apparent disbelief.[28] Some Christian writers

[26] 2 15 31
[27] 2 16 33
[28] 2 5 9

whom he does not name attempted 'to refute those who say that the relative weights of the elements make it impossible for water to exist above the starry heavens'; the pagans, that is, who object to the biblical notion of waters above the firmament. It is apparently agreed by both parties that 'Saturn is the coldest star, and that it takes thirty years to complete its orbit in the heavens', whereas 'the sun completes a similar orbit in a year, and the moon in a month, requiring a briefer time, they explain, because these bodies are lower in the heavens; and thus the extent of time is in proportion to the extent of space ' In other words, it is assumed that all the heavenly bodies move in their orbits with the same velocity.

The Christian writers now object, how can Saturn possibly be cold, on this assumption? The pagans have attended only to its proper motion; they forget that Saturn travels round the earth once every twenty-four hours; and 'the greater the speed of an object, the greater its heat' Now Saturn must travel very fast indeed, since it describes so large a circuit round the earth; and if it really is cold, the reason must be that 'it is cooled by the waters that are near it above the heavens' If we can permit ourselves a little mathematics, this would mean that Saturn's distance above the earth would be 360 times that of the moon; and assuming the moon's distance were correctly determined, Saturn would be about as far from the earth as we now know the sun is, and the sphere of the fixed stars only a little more distant, thus giving the universe a radius of about 100 million miles But such calculations are by no means in the spirit of Augustine, who protests in his most repressive mood[29] that 'it is neither necessary nor fitting to engage in subtle speculations about the distances and magnitudes of the stars or to give to such an enquiry the time needed for matters weightier and more sublime '

The firmament, however, must be explained. Is it the same as the 'heaven' mentioned in verse 1 of Genesis? And how can there be waters above the firmament if water, a heavy element, has its natural place below the air? In reply, Augustine argues that the theory of natural places does not hold good universally; he comments on the Psalmist's text 'He established the earth above the water', and shows that this is possible by commonplace examples; for instance 'the promontories that tower over the water . . . or again, the roofs of caverns that rest on solid supports and overhang the waters below'.[30] And water, also, can be found above the air; Augustine adapts an argument found in St Basil Basil himself had rejected the conventional view of the firmament as a solid crystalline vault, and supposed that it was some sort of consolidated air,[31] appealing to Amos 4:13, 'He consolidates the thunder'; air is consolidated in cavities within the clouds, and bursts out to produce the

[29] 2 16 34
[30] 2 1 4
[31] *Hex* 3 4 P G 61 A

violent crashing we hear in thunder-storms Augustine I think does not refer to thunder, and is rather less dogmatic about the firmament itself; he will not decide whether it is mobile or stationary; the name, he says, indicates 'not that it is motionless but that it is solid, and that it constitutes an impassable boundary between the waters above and the waters below ' He takes from Basil the distinction between 'water in a vaporous state and water in a denser state that flows to earth' And water-vapour, of course, can be found without penetrating the firmament: 'the clouds', he says, 'according to the testimony of those who have walked through them in the mountains, have this vaporous appearance', but 'if further condensation takes place, so that one drop is formed out of many small ones, the air, unable to support it, yields to its weight as it travels down, and this is the explanation of rain '[32] Rather surprisingly, Augustine asserts the infinite divisibility of matter, which is clean contrary to the dominant Platonic view, and makes it harder to explain the unequal densities of the four elements; but it does enable him to argue that there is no problem in the waters above the firmament; 'if water, as is obvious, can be divided into drops so small that it moves up in vapours above the air . . why could it not exist also above that purer heaven on high in still smaller drops and lighter mists?'[33]

In the passage just quoted Augustine has identified the firmament with heaven; but he by no means always does so 'Heaven' is for Augustine a word of many senses Thus we are told that 'the birds fly in heaven – but in this heaven near us'; however when Scripture refers to 'the winged creatures of heaven', they are alleged to fly along, or near, the firmament, not to be in the firmament.[34] Any such explanation of course conflicts with any possible estimate that makes the firmament 360 times more distant than the moon; in cosmology we find that Augustine solves his problems piecemeal; he has no synoptic view; and such incoherence is the penalty he pays for his dismissive attitude to physical science In any case, for his more considered view of heaven Augustine, like many of the Fathers, draws on St Paul's description of the vision whereby he was 'caught up into the third heaven', 2 Cor 12:2 Three heavens, then, there must be; and Augustine is inclined to think that this is their total number, though he knows that some theologians recognise seven, or even as many as ten.[35] He supports his total of three by an appeal to psychology, where there is a graduation from sense-perception to what we might call imagination, and thirdly to the pure intellect Thus we understand 'the first heaven as this whole corporeal heaven, namely all that is above the waters and the earth; the second, as the object of spiritual vision seen in

[32] 2 4 7
[33] 2 4 8
[34] 3 7 10
[35] 12 29 57

bodily likenesses' – an example might be St Peter's vision of the dish let down full of various animals; 'the third, as the objects seen by the mind when it has been carried out of the senses . . through the love of the Holy Spirit'.[36] 'In this way we see also love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance,and the rest, by which we draw nearer to God; and finally God himself, from whom are all things and in whom are all things' [37]

Returning from these heights, as we must, we can see that for Augustine only the lowest, or visible, heaven is conceived as located in space It seems also that it is by figurative language that hell is described as the underworld; Augustine does not seriously intend, like Milton, to place it at the centre of the earth; though in his Retractations, written towards the close of his life, he seems to think he should have done so

However that may be, a society of academics must surely warm to the prospect of a heaven in which the exercise of the intellect is our only duty and our unending joy But I myself would like it to include, in some appropriate form, the enjoyment of theological wine

[36] 12 34 67
[37] 12 24 50

XVIII

Augustine's «De Magistro»: a philosopher's view

Augustine's *De Magistro* quite properly counts as one of his minor works; yet it was influential in the Middle Ages and has attracted some interest among modern philosophers. Certainly it is by no means a negligible production. For one thing, it has literary merit. It was written at Thagaste in 389, and purports to record an actual conversation between Augustine and his gifted son Adeodatus, who died at the age of sixteen or so in that year or the next. One cannot be certain, of course, how closely the conversation was followed, if so; but at any rate the style of an actual discussion is very well caught. Apart from a long concluding address by Augustine, the two speakers deliver their contributions in a brisk exchange; and unlike many dialogues – even Plato's dialogues – in which the minor characters act only as a sounding-board for the leader, it represents Adeodatus as making proposals and objections of real weight, even if Augustine hardly appears as retracting any of his main contentions in response to his junior.

Furthermore, the book approaches a subject of the greatest philosophical and theological importance, namely our knowledge of the highest reality, even if, as Augustine admits in Chapter 8, it does so by the rather tortuous route of considering the relationship between signs and other signs, and again between signs and the things they signify. Augustine, then, is writing on the philosophy of language; and as philosophers often do, he has some bold and controversial themes to propose. There is some disagreement about their value; a recent critic has stated that «the characterization of language» found here and in some related texts «is neither original nor profound nor correct»; whereas he allows that it is bold; and it has been given a much more sympathetic assessment by Professor Burnyeat[1]. I am inclined to think, with great respect, that Burnyeat is too kind. Augustine's main theme, of course, is Christ as the teacher of supreme reality, which points one away from the philosophy of language; but on the way to his conclusion he argues – or seems to

[1] The critic is Dr C.A. KIRWAN, who kindly let me read part of his forthcoming book on Augustine's philosophy. Contrast Professor M.F. BURNYEAT's Inaugural Address, *The Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* LXI (1987) 1–24

argue – first, that all sentences are statements; secondly, that all words are nouns; and thirdly, that nothing is learnt by means of signs, in which, of course, words are included. But if this third contention is true, why has Augustine given himself the trouble of writing?

Augustine begins his argument by claiming that when we speak, our intention is always to teach. It is this claim that I have phrased, more provocatively, in the form that all sentences are statements. But this paraphrase does, I think, fairly represent Augustine's use of the words ‹teaching› and ‹learning›, at least in the early chapters of this book. What he discusses is not teaching someone how to do something, but teaching him that something is the case; and ‹learning› has a corresponding sense; it is only much later that we are led to consider teaching and learning how to do something, and then only in rather specialized instances; for instance, how to recognize what a word stands for; and beyond this, the very special instance of teaching or learning how to see things as they really are.

Initially, then, teaching is represented as an act of making statements. This is clearly seen in the first few words, where Adeodatus says in effect that speech comprises both statements and questions; for our purpose in speaking is either to teach or to learn, and we learn by asking questions. Augustine answers by saying that the sole purpose of asking questions is to teach ones interlocutor what one wishes to know.

One can clearly see that this answer is faulty by taking a modern example. My friend asks me «Why are you going to the enquiry office?» I reply, «Because I want to find out the time of the next train to London». It is clear that this answer tells my friend what I wish to know; but it is equally clear that I am not asking him a question; I may well believe that he does not know the answer. On the other hand my friend's question, «Why are you going ... ?», does indeed tell me what he wants to know; but it also contains an element which cannot be reduced to a statement, namely a request for information. Once requests are mentioned, we can see that speech has many other functions – commands, encouragements, exclamations, what you will; some at least of these would be easily found in ancient grammar books[2] Admittedly, a variety of needs may be satisfied by the statement form; for instance «You may go», or «Well, I am surprised»; but one misses their point if one then assumes that the sole purpose is to impart information, or as Augustine says, to teach

Adeodatus answers Augustine with an objection; he observes that our utterance may take the form of singing, and that we often sing when we are alone, and so cannot be intending to teach anyone. Augustine makes

[2] Cf. e g SVF 2,186–187

a partial concession, suggesting now that there are two reasons for speaking; we speak either to teach or to remind ourselves or others; perhaps then we sing to remind ourselves. Adeodatus retorts that we often sing purely for pleasure; but Augustine replies that what pleases us is the rhythm and music, which is independent of the words

Adeodatus has made a valid point; but he could have chosen a better example; why should he not take the case of poetry, or indeed any form of words in which we take pleasure? It is surely absurd to argue that we recite such words in order to remind ourselves of them; no doubt we sometimes do this; but in most cases we recall them simply because we enjoy doing so. To recall them by way of a reminder is a special exercize, ensuring that we can continue to recall and to enjoy them in future

Adeodatus however is not yet prepared to accept Augustine's short list of two reasons for speaking; he objects that we can speak to God in prayer; and we cannot be intending to teach God anything, or to remind him, as if he had forgotten. Augustine's reply strikes a deeper note than anything he has said so far. God, he says, should be sought and prayed to «in the silent depths of the rational soul». There is no need of words, except perhaps to remind others in public prayer and to arouse in them the desire to pray. But this immediately brings up the point that when the supreme Teacher taught his disciples to pray, he did so by teaching them a form of words. Adeodatus' reply is to introduce what becomes a central theme in the dialogue: «He did not teach them words, but realities by means of words». But Augustine's comment does not make it perfectly clear what he understands by wordless prayer. He says, «Although we utter no sound, yet because we ponder the words themselves, we do speak within our own minds». Prayer thus involves the devout inner pondering of certain words; what is unclear to me is whether this devout pondering simply is the act of prayer, or whether prayer involves some further activity, a direction of the mind towards the highest reality, which is prompted by the unvoiced words but goes beyond them. However it be named, Augustine accepts this direction as our greatest obligation, privilege and fulfilment

Returning to philosophy, we find Augustine concluding that such unuttered speech serves only to remind; our memory, by recalling certain words, brings to mind the realities themselves of which the words are signs

He goes on to enquire, in Chapter 2, how the meaning of words can be explained, taking as an example the verse from Vergil «si nihil ex tanta superis placet urbe relinqui»; in the event, however, only the first three words are discussed. Augustine seems to assume that if words are significant they must represent things in the way nouns represent things;

and this causes difficulties, especially with ‹si› and ‹nihil›; it might have been better to inquire what their function is within the sentence as a whole. Augustine tries to meet the difficulties by adopting a suggestion which goes back to Aristotle[3], that words signify states of mind. Thus ‹if› signifies doubt; ‹nothing› signifies the mind's disappointment in its search for reality. In the third case this method is apparently not adopted; Adeodatus explains that ‹from› signifies separation, which comes rather nearer to explaining a word in terms of its function. In passing, there is little to be said for this Aristotelian theory; of course ‹some› words stand for states of mind, but they are the exception; we call them psychological terms. But this discussion leads on to a much more central point. We have tried our hand at explaining words by means of words, that is, by signs; but can we demonstrate the realities they stand for without using signs? This leads to an interesting discussion of what modern philosophers call ‹ostensive definition›. Can we show what the word ‹wall› means? We can of course point to a wall; but the act of pointing is itself a sign, so that our condition is not fulfilled. Indeed, we could add, the sign is ambiguous; we might be taken to mean that the word ‹paries› stands for the act of pointing, not for the wall. It is conceded, however, that we can explain words which refer to actions by performing the action; always provided that we are not already performing the action when the question is asked. Breathing, it follows, would be an action which we could not demonstrate in this way.

The discussion now passes to a subject which seems to me rather less important, namely the cases in which signs are signified by signs. Augustine brings up the case of the word ‹nomen›, which can be translated either ‹name› or ‹noun›. ‹Nomen›, he says, quite correctly, stands for a class of words which includes itself, for the word ‹noun› is a noun; here then we have a sign which signifies a sign. But the class of nouns includes words like ‹Rome› and ‹virtue› and ‹river›; these words are also signs, but the realities they stand for are not signs. Augustine goes on to put the question whether there are signs which have ‹reciprocal signification›, so that ‹x› signifies ‹y›, but conversely ‹y› signifies ‹x›. He takes the case of ‹noun› and ‹word› (‹uerbum›). He is aware that the two words have different meanings, but suggests that the difference is analogous to that between ‹coloured› and ‹visible›[4]; in modern terms, we would say that the reference of the two terms is the same, though their sense is different. In other words, all words are nouns.

[3] *De Interpretatione* 1, 16 a 3

[4] Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* 2 7, 418 a 27sqq. The distinction between ‹sense› (Sinn) and ‹reference› (Bedeutung) was introduced by FREGE; see below p. 68, on ‹nomen› and ‹uerbum›

Now this is to fly in the face of common sense. The dullest grammarian will state, quite correctly, that nouns form only one of the six or eight parts of speech; moreover Augustine himself has already represented Adeodatus as saying that all nouns are words, but not all words are nouns, and himself replying with the perfectly correct analogy of ‹horses› and ‹animals›. What has misled him? One can perhaps understand how easily confusion can arise by quoting this sentence from *mag* 5,11: «Then you know that as ‹noun› is signified by ‹word›, so ‹word› is signified by ‹noun› ». This suggests that there is a symmetrical relation between them; but we have a prior assurance that this cannot be true; and with a little patience we can work out a corrected paraphrase of Augustine's sentence. I suggest the following: ‹Word› stands for a class of signs which includes the word ‹noun› and moreover includes all nouns; but ‹noun› stands for a class of signs which includes the word ‹word› but does not include all words. This satisfies the common-sense assumption that all nouns are words but not all words are nouns.

Augustine himself seems to think that some further proof of his paradox is needed; and he finds it by quoting the text of *2 Cor* 1,19, «non erat in Christo est et non, sed est in illo erat». He argues, correctly as I think, that St. Paul cannot mean that the word ‹est› was in Christ, but rather, what is signified or named by the word ‹est›. This leads him to the conclusion that the word ‹est› is a noun, because it names or signifies what was in Christ; for «that by which anything is named is a noun». One might of course comment that St. Paul's expression to which he appeals is an extremely unusual use of language; but Augustine proceeds to broaden his argument by showing that any word whatsoever can be discussed, and can appear as the subject of a sentence; he points to two sentences which contain the words ‹because› and ‹if›, and argues that we can legitimately say « ‹If› is correct, while ‹because› is incorrect». This leads him, not to the well-grounded conclusion that any word can in certain circumstances function as a noun, but to the incautious assertion that «all words are nouns and all nouns are words». The first clause is indefensible; and we cannot mend matters by translating ‹nomina› as ‹names›. Indeed is not clear even that the class of nouns enjoys a privileged position. We might argue by the same token that the noun ‹dolor› is really a verb, since in the context ‹proh dolor› it is equivalent to ‹doleo›, or possibly ‹dolendum est›; and as we all know, the noun ‹pax› can be used to frame a request. We classify words in terms of their primary and basic function, while noting that variations are possible. We do not quote the phrase ‹But me no buts› to argue that ‹but› is a verb, but it is also a noun.

Burnyeat offers an interesting defence of Augustine at this point[5], showing, quite correctly, that Augustine recognizes the distinction between the mention of a word and the use of it and arguing that any word whatsoever can be used to name itself, or again to name the ‹dictio› that it signifies. In the case we have just considered, « ‹If› is correct, while ‹because› is incorrect», Augustine is not making a point about the two Latin conjunctions involved; in that case, we should have quoted them verbatim, instead of translating them; he is referring to the conditional relation signified by the Latin ‹si› and the English ‹if›, and so on. But, we may comment, he is not discussing the force of these conjunctions taken in isolation, but in the context of two sentences in which they occur. Might it not be better, then, to say he is contrasting two sentences in respect of the single feature by which they differ? This, it appears, would much reduce the significance of Burnyeat's defence; though it would be valid, no doubt, if Augustine were giving a more generalized treatment of the two contrasted words.

In any case, all that Augustine has proved is that various kinds of words can be used as nouns. And I do not think that he is at all clear about the force of his own arguments. He has stated previously, and correctly, that nouns, ‹nomina›, form a distinct class within the larger class of words, ‹uerba›; whereas the Latin ‹nomen› and the Greek ‹onoma› are genuine synonyms. But he goes on to make the quite different claim that ‹nomen› and ‹uerbum› have the same range of applicability, or reference; it is their sense that is different, ‹uerbum› being so called because of sounds which strike the ear, ‹uerberare›, and ‹nomen› because of its connection with ‹knowing›. It seems, then, that they are related like the words ‹ouis› and ‹bidens›, two words which have different senses or associations, but which both name the same class of sheep. Our familiar example of ‹morning star› and ‹evening star› is similar, except that the phrases name one and the same individual, not the same class.

Could Augustine have been using his inconsistency as a pedagogic device intended to exercize his readers' wits by challenging them to see through his mystifications? I do not think so. More probably he thought he really had established his paradoxical claim. He was by no means the last great philosopher to be ensnared by a beguiling theory.

Having summarized his conclusions, Augustine seems a little uncertain how to resume the discussion, though he insists that it has a serious point in directing our thoughts towards eternal life. But Chapter 8 contributes little beyond reaffirming the distinction between signs and the realities they signify. Once again it is nouns which occupy the field, the

[5] Op. cit. 9–12.

noun ‹homo› being taken as an example. New ground is first attained in the next chapter, where Augustine suggests that realities are more valuable than the signs which represent them. Adeodatus objects, quite properly, that bad things have a disvalue; they are therefore worse than their signs. The discussion then turns to the knowledge which signs convey; is it a good thing to give bad things a name? Adeodatus is doubtful; but Augustine soon persuades him that knowledge even of bad realities is good; it is better than their signs, which in turn are better than the bad realities. Adeodatus however points out that there are four things to be considered: the name, the reality, knowledge of the name, and knowledge of the reality. In the case of bad things, perhaps it is better simply to know their name than to know the reality? But Augustine dissents; he insists that knowledge of vices is more valuable than knowledge of their names.

It is a pity that this argument was not continued, and the important phrases more fully defined. What does Augustine mean by knowledge of a word? Is it enough, say, to know that the Latin word ‹uitium› corresponds to the Greek ‹kakia›, or to paraphrase it as ‹malitia cordis›? Or does one have to know what the word represents? In this case, knowledge of the word demands at least some knowledge of the reality. But is it a good thing to know what, say, lust is, as Augustine seems to insist? And in what sense can one know it without experiencing it? One might perhaps answer that perfect innocence is impossible in this world, where we are members one of another; the man bent on securing his own innocence may well be insensitive, and may not be successful as a pastor. The good man will have had enough experience of lust to put him on his guard against it; he may perhaps combine the maximum of sympathy with the minimum of actual engagement. There is also, no doubt, a place for the man who has fallen but has not been finally corrupted. He will contribute his own resources of fellow-feeling and practical experience. Some of these thoughts will be found in Augustine; but not, I think, in the *De Magistro*.

We now return to the question whether realities can be demonstrated without the use of signs. The activities of speaking and teaching, it is agreed, form an exception, since in their case the use of signs is part of the reality to be demonstrated. But why could not one have a simple demonstration, say, of the act of walking? Adeodatus sees difficulties here; a mere demonstration would not make it clear whether it was a demonstration of walking, or of walking so many steps. He could well have added that quite a complex demonstration would be needed to explain which various styles of movement can properly qualify as walking; and could this be achieved without a sign of negation to disqualify rejected

examples? But Augustine overrules his objection, and persuades him that an intelligent man could learn from a demonstration all that is named by the word ‹fowling›; and what can be said of fowling must also apply to walking.

This, *pace* Burnyeat, is a most unsatisfactory argument. Fowling seems a convincing example precisely because it is a complex and somewhat unusual activity; the fowler would have good grounds for supposing that a passer-by who stopped and looked closely at his instruments was curious to understand their function. Even so, his demonstration could not make it clear whether he was demonstrating the art of fowling as such, or the local style of fowling, which is roughly the point that Adeodatus has made in the case of walking. But Augustine has given no grounds at all for concluding that his argument can be generalized so as to apply to commonplace activities such as walking. Worse still, he goes on to assert, not simply that some things can be learnt without signs, but that «nothing is learnt by the signs proper to it»; for if I do not know what the sign stands for, it is a meaningless sound, and if I do know, there is nothing to be learnt. Augustine explains this point by referring to the obscure word ‹saraballae›, which he takes to mean ‹head-coverings›, and to the familiar word ‹caput›. He concludes that «by means of words we learn nothing but words; in fact, only the noise and sound of words».

But what about the story of the three holy children, in which the words ‹saraballae› and ‹caput› occur? Do we not learn of their adventures by means of words? Augustine has a two-fold answer to this question. First, he says, «we already knew the meaning of all those words; for instance, what three boys are, what a furnace is, what fire is», and so on. «But the names Ananias, Azarias and Misael conveyed nothing to me, any more than ‹saraballae› did». His second answer is that the events described in the story really did take place as they are described, and that it is useful, indeed perhaps obligatory, to believe this; but that such beliefs do not constitute knowledge. Knowledge involves direct awareness; on the one hand, knowledge of sense-qualities and sensible objects; on the other, «those things which we behold with the mind, that is, with the intellect and reason»; or again, «those things which we behold immediately in that interior light of truth which effects enlightenment and happiness in the so-called inner man».

There is no lack of comments to be made at this point. Let me try to present my observations under three headings: first, Augustine's contention that nothing can be learnt by means of words; secondly, the strategy of his argument at the point where he introduces the concept of belief; and thirdly, the impression he gives of rational knowledge.

First, then, Augustine's problems in the first part of the book are largely artificial; at least, they arise because he is working with a defective concept of language. His discussion of words is in practice mainly concerned with nouns, and moreover with nouns taken in isolation. He does not recognize that we normally gain information, and impart it, by means of complex combinations of signs, so that the interplay of familiar words can give us genuinely new information; and for that matter, the significance of a completely unknown word can often be correctly deduced from the context in which it occurs. Augustine fails to see this, I think, because he continues to conceive the problem on the lines of Plato's *Cratylus*, which had come to dominate linguistic theory to a degree which was no longer advantageous, obscuring the valuable discoveries made later by Aristotle and especially by the Stoics; for these observed much more clearly that the significant unit of discourse is not the word, but the sentence.

We might perhaps agree with Augustine that no form of words can introduce us to an experience that is entirely unknown to us, just as a blind man can never know what is really meant by the word ‹red›. But even this is not beyond question. A friend's words might induce in us the totally unfamiliar experience of falling in love; even blindness, if its cause were psychological, might be cured by a psychologist's incantation. Moreover, Augustine has probably underestimated the power of analogy. Suppose he tells us, «Explain to me the significance of ‹heaven›, if you can» Even if we accepted the limitation of using only nouns, we could surely convey *some* idea of it by saying «Light, fire, soap, honey»; it would be sufficiently clear that heaven is something to be honoured and praised; there would be no danger of our being taken to refer to the unpleasant taste of soap or the pervasive stickiness of honey. Even the man who is incurably blind could be given some useful information, if we were free to exploit the resources of normal language, since he understands what surfaces are, and knows that they have distinctive qualities like smoothness or hardness. We could not, of course, give him any first-hand knowledge of a visual quality; but it would not be misleading to explain that redness is characteristic of blood, and often appears on military uniforms, so that it has associations for us akin to those aroused by the sound of a trumpet.

Secondly, we may consider the new turn given to the argument at the point where Augustine introduces the story of the three children. He has argued so far that nothing is learnt by means of words; and when commenting on the story he maintains this claim; the word ‹furnace› brings to mind only what we know already, the word ‹saraballae› remains obscure. Yet it seems obvious that there is something that we did not know,

and only discovered by hearing the words of the Bible, namely the complex fact that the three boys were put into the furnace and sang praises to God and suffered no harm Augustine claims that this awareness is not to be called knowledge; nevertheless on his showing the story is true and it is useful to believe it. *Some* understanding of the story is therefore implied; and if the story is true, and we come to understand and believe it, this would satisfy most people that we have learnt it.

Augustine does not concede this; he conceives learning as a process of coming to see things for oneself, and teaching as a process of enabling someone to do this. There is a valid point concealed here, namely that the teacher cannot do the pupil's learning for him; at best he can present the facts in a form which the pupil will easily grasp. But this useful observation is confused by the initial assumption that all teaching is done by means of words, and that all learning involves either seeing or something analogous to seeing In fact, of course, the unavoidable limitations of teaching are equally pressing if the teacher works by giving a visual demonstration – where, as we have seen, Augustine believes much too readily that the pupil will grasp the point he is intended to grasp. Once we discard the assumption that the teacher proffers only words, it becomes obvious that words can enormously enlarge the usefulness of a visual demonstration Augustine in effect admits this while commenting on our awareness of sensible things: «When we are asked about them, we reply if they are present to our senses; for example if we are looking at the new moon and someone asks what it is or where» The curious impression that we can only answer questions about the moon when we are actually looking at it is soon corrected; Augustine allows that memory can supplement our own direct experience But it seems obvious that a man can recognize the moon and point it out even if he believes, with the Manichees, that the moon is an inflatable bag There is far more value in the belief that the moon is a spherical body that shines by reflecting the sun's light; and such a belief can be held by a man who has never seen the moon.

This brings us, thirdly, to the contrast which Augustine draws between belief and knowledge In the *De Magistro*, belief seems to be introduced as an expedient enabling Augustine to admit that a biblical narrative is informative while denying that it equips us with knowledge But this treatment of it gravely underrates the importance which belief should have in his theology, and which he actually gives it in several other books From the standpoint of epistemology there is nothing in the story of the three children which distinguishes it from other biblical narratives; let us say, the narrative of Christ's Resurrection. But for a Christian it seems a disastrous understatement to say that the Resurrection narrative is something which it is useful to believe.

As a matter of general principle Augustine plainly holds that knowledge is superior to belief; this is after all suggested by the biblical contrast between faith and sight. The highest form of knowledge, then, is found in those heavenly realities which we come to know directly through the illuminating power of Christ the Teacher, and which will be more perfectly apparent in the life to come. In the mean time, it may seem that belief is too lightly regarded; but it is a fact of our human condition that some things can at present only be believed; in the hereafter these same things will be fully known. In any case, Augustine is not committed to the crude idea that any and every item of direct awareness is more valuable than any item of belief He holds that in the use of our minds we gain a direct awareness of intelligible realities which is analogous to our direct awareness of sensible, and particularly visible, things But in our present context he does not fully develope this idea; so far as I can discover, the only item of knowledge which he describes us attaining by our intellectual vision is the proposition that wise men are superior to fools, which it hardly needs an intelligent reader of Cicero to discover

The intellectual vision of the highest realities is a noble theme; but discussion of it would take us far beyond the *De Magistro*

Augustine's De Magistro: An Addendum

In retrospect I must add a comment on the oddity of Augustine's treatment of the meaning of words. He knows the grammarians' distinction between different parts of speech; but this seems to have lodged in his head as a mere piece of book-learning. We might perhaps excuse him for knowing little about the long and elaborate discussion, to which the Stoics made important contributions, which led to the recognition of eight parts of speech. But the veriest tiro should have remembered the passage in *Sophist* 261e, which makes it clear that a meaningful sentence, *logos*, requires both a noun and a verb (*onoma*, *rhēma*). Since the word *onoma* signifies both 'noun' and 'name', it seems plain common sense that the function of naming things should be performed by an *onoma*; whereas a *rhēma* has the function of indicating an 'action or inaction, an existence or non-existence' (262c). Augustine is misled by the fact that *any* word can be used in a secondary sense to name itself; and this leads, by a further mistake, to the view that any word is normally used to name the state of mind that it expresses. There is certainly a very well-known text which encourages this mistake; in *De Interpretatione* 1, 16 a 3 ff., both spoken and written words are 'symbols of affections in the soul'; but this immediately follows a sentence which claims that the distinction of 'name' and 'verb' is the first point that must be determined.

In his generally excellent book on Augustine (*Augustine, Ancient Thought Baptized* [Cambridge, 1994], pp. 314–16) Professor Rist attempts a defence. 'Porphyry', he writes, 'argued precisely that a proposition about the ordinary world . . . consists of a subject plus a concept (*noēma*, or *ennoia*) which indicates the special and disambiguating features of the subject in each case . . . Thus the reference of the whole proposition is the same as that of its subject-sign, which acquires a privileged status such as it also enjoys in *The Master*'.

In my review I considered Rist's discussion of first-order and second-order predicates which elucidates the fallacy in (e.g.) 'A lion comes out of your mouth'. This, I think, does not call for criticism. But the passage I have quoted above seems to me totally misleading, whether or not it correctly represents what Porphyry says. For the comment I have quoted only holds good for a particular class of sentences, namely definitions. It does not apply to the vast majority of statements about 'the ordinary world'; to take Plato's own example, 'A man learns' (262d). It is impossible to take this as a disguised form of definition; say, 'A man, *qua* rational, is a learner'; for Socrates immediately comments 'He makes a statement about that which is or is becoming or has become or is to be'; and this comment, even if it applies to definitions at all, as 'that which is' might suggest, clearly does not apply to them exclusively. It seems obvious that 'A man learns' is to be read, like Aristotle's example 'A man runs', as referring to an event. Thus any theory of the identity of reference of subject and predicate is excluded *ab initio*. This of course does not reduce The Master as a whole to nonsense; it has many interesting and wise things to say. But it is absurd to claim that a patent fallacy 'makes sense of *The Master*'.

To repeat what I wrote in my review, the simple subject-predicate analysis breaks down very obviously in the specimen sentence that Augustine quotes: *(Si) nihil ex tanta superis placet urbe relinqui*, where (as I said) 'it is a puzzle to identify the subject'. And Augustine's theory fails to recognise that some words *in their ordinary usage* do not have a referential function at all; their function is to qualify other words. 'The prefixing of *Si* transforms what would otherwise be a statement into a supposition from which consequences are drawn, while *non* reverses the sense of adjacent words'. By neglecting the functions of words that are not nouns – and thus even of verbs! – Augustine rules out *ab initio* any satisfactory theory of the sentence.

A bold man might attempt a defence on some such lines as these: granted that *The Master* culminates in a tremendous theme, our knowledge of the highest realities, Augustine, he might argue, was not obliged to pursue this theme with unremitting seriousness; he might on accasion allow himself to tease, to entertain and to beguile, by way of relaxation. But I would hesitate to pursue this fancy. Augustine was a proud man who did not like being made to look foolish; and he gives himself away by stating, with an explicit warning (§33): 'If we consider this a little more closely, perhaps you will find that nothing is learnt even by its appropriate sign. If I am given a sign and I do not know the thing of which it is a sign, it can teach me nothing. If I know the thing, what do I learn from the sign?' Augustine does not warn us that his dilemma is exposed as an obvious fallacy at *Meno* 80e, confirmed by *Euthydemus* 276d. For a one-time professor of rhetoric this is a serious piece of professional incompetence.

XIX

Augustine, the *Meno* and the subconscious mind

Augustine's view of memory has often been described, and is known to be complex. It can indicate the recall and reproduction of experiences and reports that one has encountered; but it also ranges more widely to include one's habits of thought and practical abilities, where 'experience' might seem to be a better equivalent. These two conceptions are very unequally developed. The first is presented in an unforgettable simile in *Confessions* Book 10, comparing memory to a labyrinthine cave or storehouse with branching passages (10.8.12-13, 9.16-10.17) which contains both items lying ready to hand and others which are buried in some remote recess, hard to retrieve and yet not completely forgotten; one must in some sense know what one is looking for, otherwise when remembered it would not be recognised as the object of one's search (10.16.24, 18.27, 19.28).

Should we refer to the contents of memory as 'objects'? Augustine notes that they are not 'the things themselves', *ipsa*, (10.8.13); the term 'objects' is correct in so far as they are usually seen as inanimate, with no suggestion of living beings imprisoned in the cave. Augustine speaks of them as 'images' (*similitudines, imagines*); but we remember not only persons and places which we have seen, but actions and emotions (10.8.14); though such images do not have the power of present sensations. A memory of past sadness need not induce present sadness (10.14.21-2), though presumably it may do so. Again, we can remember how we forgot things (10.16.24); Augustine is puzzled here; perhaps he has confused the unproblematic 'memory of forgetting something' with the enigmatic 'remembering what one does not remember'. There is no puzzle about *past* forgettings; I can sensibly say 'I remember that I forgot *x*' and exactly describe the *x* which I forgot. But, as Augustine has noted, if I *now* say 'I have forgotten *x*', I can give some indication of the *x* that I have forgotten; but I cannot specify it exactly unless I remember it.

On the whole, Augustine seems to picture an active responsible self who is fairly sharply dissociated from his memories. He operates with them, as well as searching them out; he breaks them down and reassembles their parts to produce new forms (*Conf.* 10.8.14, *Trin.* 9.6.10, 11.10.17) like a child playing the game of 'heads, bodies and tails'. But they may also imperceptibly merge to present false recollections (*Trin.* 12.15.24, *ad fin.*). They are seldom considered as acting on their owner, or on one another; the most obvious change they undergo is to weaken and fade (*Conf.* 10.11.18). A memory of sensuous experience may indeed be a present temptation (10.30.41); yet it need not be (10.21.30); and there is no suggestion that it intends to tempt. Augustine makes rather little of the fact that unwelcome memories may force themselves on our attention (cf. *Conf.* 10.14.22). At 10.19.28, some form of purposive activity is ascribed to memory itself, as it seeks to supply what is missing. But on the whole, we seldom hear that a man's memories help to make him the man he is.

What of the contrasting conception, which we might judge to be equally important? This is much less vividly presented. Augustine speaks of 'the skills acquired through the liberal arts', noting that in their case 'I carry not the images, but the very skills themselves' (10.9.16). Rather typically, he thinks first of 'the skills of dialectical debate', and is puzzled to know how they are acquired (ibid, with 10.12.19). He does not suggest, as we might, that we can generalize and abstract logical patterns embodied in the reports which reach us through the senses; his answer is rather, that their origin must be found in some remote corner of the memory (10.12.19,13.20). This is not unlike the view proposed in the *Meno*; but there is no suggestion how they came to be there. At a humbler level 'beasts and birds also have memory; otherwise they could not rediscover their dens and nests' (10.17.26). But there is little notice of the role of memory in human practical activity.

It is indeed often suggested that Augustine's view of memory and recollection is indebted to the theory set out in Plato's *Meno*, that one's intuitive knowledge of certain facts (in Plato, geometrical truths) derives from an exact knowledge of them which we acquired in a pre-natal existence. Augustine, after cautiously approving the doctrine of the soul's pre-existence, came to abandon it in his middle life. Te Selle dates this definite rejection of the pre-existence theory to the *De Genesi ad Litteram*, written in 406.[1] It follows that in *De*

[1] E. te Selle, *Augustine the Theologian* (London 1970) pp. 69-70.

Trinitate 12.15.24, where the *Meno* is clearly recalled, Augustine is summarizing a view which he had come to reject. But in the early works, and indeed in the *Confessions*, he is still sympathetic. The logic of *Confessions* 10.20.29-31 would suggest that in some sense we recall a pre-Adamic happiness which we have never encountered in our present lives.

A general knowledge of the pre-existence theory raises no problems. It would presumably figure in quite elementary lectures on the soul; any proof that the soul can exist apart from the body would serve to disprove Epicurean materialism. But can we go further, and suggest that Augustine quite early in his life acquired some knowledge of the *Meno* itself? Courcelle stated that he is wholly dependent on Cicero's *Tusculans* for what little he knows of the *Meno*;[2] Chadwick seems to be a little more positive.[3] I shall refer to some passages in the *Meno* which directly or indirectly might seem to have influenced Augustine.

The first comes late in the dialogue, at 97a ff., where Socrates claims that 'men may be good and useful to their country' not only through knowledge but through right opinion (δόξα ἀληθής as opposed to ἐπιστήμη). This passage is noteworthy, as it contrasts with many others in which Plato regards opinion, δόξα, as markedly inferior to knowledge (esp. *Rep.* 509d ff., 511de). But 'belief' is a perfectly adequate translation of δόξα (cf. *PGL* s.v., B); and one would suspect that the passage would be useful to Christian apologists. The general argument used against the sceptics, that reasonable assurance should be followed where complete certainty is impossible, is common enough, but seems to derive from sources other than the *Meno*.[4] Moreover, the dialogue was apparently unknown to Eusebius and Methodius. But there is an inconspicuous parallel which perhaps deserves mention. The usefulness of belief is illustrated in the *Meno* by the example of 'knowing the way to Larissa' (97a ff.). When in the *Confessions* Augustine alludes to the memory

[2] P. Courcelle, *Les lettres grecques en occident*, Paris 1948, p. 158, ref. Augustine *Trin.* 12.15.24, Cicero *Tusculan Orations* 3.22.77. See further G. Bonner, *St Augustine of Hippo* (London 1963) pp. 394-5.

[3] H. Chadwick, *Saint Augustine, Confessions* (Oxford 1992) pp. 185 n. 12, 189 n. 15.

[4] *Conf.* 6.5.7, *Ut. Cred.* 12,26-7; cf. my *Philosophy in Christian Antiquity* (Cambridge 1994) p. 112 and n. 6; Cicero *Lucullus* 99-109.

of beasts and birds (10.17.26) it is nest-finding, not nest-building, which strikes him as the appropriate example.

Another passage which deserves notice is the sophistical argument set out at *Meno* 80e[5]: 'A man cannot inquire either about what he knows or about what he does not know. For he cannot inquire about what he knows; for he knows it, and so no such inquiry is needed; nor again, about what he does not know; for then he does not know what he is to inquire about'. Clearly the sophism can be attacked from both sides. If one knows something, one can nevertheless inquire into the nature and grounds of one's knowledge. But the converse argument is perhaps the more interesting. If one does not know something, this by no means prevents one from identifying the problem into which one should inquire; though no doubt in some kinds of ignorance it will. It seems to me that Augustine may have known the passage under discussion and formulated a reply on some such lines; and that this reply underlies his treatment of memory, when he argues that one must in some sense remember the things that one has forgotten, otherwise one could not identify the forgotten fact or belief. 'Memory of forgetfulness' remains a puzzle at *Confessions* 10.16.24; but an answer is soon suggested, at 10.18.27.

As we have observed, Augustine pictures memory as a kind of cavern or store-house. This description has no apparent connection with the famous parable of the cave in *Republic* 514a ff.; it is a distant derivative of that expounded in the *Theaetetus* 197c ff., where Plato compares the knowing mind to a bird-cage; knowledge may be present like a bird in the cage, without being immediately accessible, like a bird in the hand.

In pointing out this possible influence, we seem to be thinking of memory in its narrower and more precise sense, as the recalling of previously known experiences or reports. Can it be related to the wider sense which Augustine gives to *memoria*, making it the ground of ability and constructive thinking? It is worth pointing out an important limitation both in Plato's parable and in Augustine's. The birds in Plato's bird-cage merely fly about, so that they are sometimes accessible, sometimes not. There is no suggestion that they might mate and produce offspring. And Augustine's cave does not contain potentially active prisoners; the main suggestion is of inanimate objects. But is it an essential feature of either simile that such a limitation should persist?

[5] Cf. *Euthydemus* 276d ff., presumably unknown to Augustine

Clearly both writers have, in some sense, a theory of the subconscious. Things can be there even though unperceived, or half-perceived, or dimly perceived; it is this dim perception which enables us, so to speak, to drag them out for inspection and further development. But there is not much suggestion, so far, that these hidden images and urges interact one with another; indeed this might hinder the functioning of memory in the narrower sense; we are all aware of a tendency to elaborate and dramatize the experiences which we profess to remember (cf. *Trin.* 11.10.17, 12.15.24). But it may well be that this idea of subconscious interaction is just what is needed to underpin Augustine's conception of *memoria* in its wider sense.

Obviously we must not think of the subconscious as harbouring a set of thoughts, beliefs, wishes, speculations or whatever, which are precisely similar to conscious thought except that they happen to be going on behind a curtain. This, I think, was a mistake underlying Freud's notorious theory of the Oedipus Complex; it easily suggested the view that all, or many, men had an unconscious desire for sexual intimacy with their mothers. The truth is more probably that sexual desires and fantasies are simply associated with the female figure best known to us from childhood. This might still embarrass us; but it by no means amounts to a formulated desire which is only checked by social pressures, internalized as a 'censor'.

It may be, therefore, that Augustine's cave is best interpreted on the analogy of our dreams; bearing in mind the extraordinary variety of our dreams, which may present a totally incoherent succession of images, or one in which there is no apparent connecting thread, but sometimes offer us a relatively consistent, though perhaps surprising, exhibition of a possible experience, or a formula which impresses itself as authoritative. In most cases, our waking mind recognizes that this latter impression is delusive; but not in all. There are exceptional cases in which dreams provide us with the solution of a problem, or correctly predict future events.

We have suggested an impression of Augustine's cave as not simply a repository of inert images or memories waiting to be excavated, but a medium in which associations of ideas are formed and again dissolved. This could perhaps be seen as a process of random shuffling which leads, every so often, to an association which is sufficiently striking to hold our slumbering attention, and may indeed be veridical; as a very simple example, we might

misremember a lesson which itself was incorrect, and so come up with the right answer. But perhaps a process of selection and combination could be located below the level of conscious attention (cf. *Conf.* 10.19.28); even without conscious control we could have some degree of organizing ability resembling that which enables us to coordinate the various muscles involved in executing some complex physical movement.

Is this picture recognizable as a legitimate interpretation or supplement of Augustine's conception of memory? It depends, I would think, on which aspect of it we prefer to emphasize. If we reflect that he interpreted *memoria* in the broadest possible sense, assigning to it out ability to solve new problems and formulate new theories, our view of his cave as a storehouse of active and interactive images and thoughts will be seen as a legitimate development of his theory. If we concentrate on his interpretation of *memoria* in the narrower sense, as the recalling of something which has been, or could be, forgotten, then we may note his observation that our subconscious associative power may lead us to 'think false things' (*Trin*, 11.10.17) or it may be to misremember. Yet even this *memoria* will be a useful analogy for the process of constructive thought.

Any such theory, however, will be a valuable corrective of the all-too-common caricature of the intuitive intellect as a magical accomplishment which gets somewhere starting from nowhere at all, a process of creation which is nevertheless veridical. The Greeks, I believe, were much misled by the analogy so commonly drawn between intellect, *nous*, and the sense of sight. They were impressed by its clarity and discrimination as compared with our other senses;[6] it did not, I think, occur to them that vision is a skill which has to be gradually acquired in infancy; at least, I cannot recall any notice of the imperfect vision of infants to compare with the frequent reference to their lisping speech and stumbling gait.[7]

We can thus be startled to find Augustine suggesting that ethical concepts and values – in particular, pure love [8] – can be known by a process of pure intuition, analogous, perhaps, to that by which we assent to a geometrical proof. We might perhaps see this as

[6] See, for instance, the Index to Cohn and Wendland's *Philo* s.v. ὄψις.

[7] Conf. 1.6.8 'paulatim sentiebam, ubi essem' may be noted, but is hardly typical.

[8] Gen. ad Lit. 12.11.22. Cf. Mag. 12.40, on Truth.

confirming the influence of Plato's *Meno*. But in fact this view of moral knowledge is, I would hold, unplatonic as well as imperfect. It is admitted, of course, that Plato regarded geometrical knowledge as an ideal, in respect of clarity and certainty, to which our knowledge of transcendent realities may hope to approximate. But he also holds that such knowledge can only be attained by a complex process of dialectic, which in this case would involve comparing and contrasting the various forms of our experience to which the word 'love' can be applied, and thereby coming to isolate the unique reality to which the word 'love' most properly applies and which articulates all its derivative and improper uses.

It was common ground between Plato and Augustine that there is such a supreme reality, though they do not wholly agree on its proper designation. Plato can speak of an Idea of the Good, which is the source of all goodness, and which – according to the *Symposium* – can be best approached through purified human affection. Augustine devotes himself to an all-encompassing God who unites and fulfils within himself all perfections, intellect, goodness, beauty and love. Using the language of practical devotion rather than philosophy, Augustine finds that this supreme reality can be glimpsed in a flash of illumination of inspiration. But he also holds that a lifetime of patient discipleship is needed for us to understand it and, in the measure which our mortality permits, to offer ourselves to its transforming power.

XX

LOGIC AND THE APPLICATION OF NAMES TO GOD

My title seems to call for an essay in philosophy. It hardly relates to the section of Gregory's text that we were asked to examine; it would indeed allow me to by-pass Gregory completely and investigate the problem of names for God in the context of modern logical theory. But this I think would hardly appeal to a company of theologians. I prefer to begin by showing how the problem was conceived during the seven centuries extending from Plato to Gregory, - at the risk of some overlap with Professor Kobusch, whose contribution was not yet announced when I began to consider this paper.

The first and most influential discussion of names is found in one of Plato's earlier dialogues, the Cratylus. The question here proposed is whether the correct use, the ὀρθότης, of names is merely a matter of convention, or whether it has some basis in nature. By 'convention' and 'nature' I refer to the contrast between νόμος and φύσις which was already familiar, being used for example by the Sophists when discussing the basis of morality; νόμος then stands for accepted custom rather than enacted law. Broadly speaking we may say that Plato takes up a cross-bench position, inclining slightly towards the view that names are significant by nature. Socrates first interrogates Hermogenes, the champion of convention. At the outset his position is not clearly defined; he maintains that the right use of names involves convention and agreement, but in the same breath adopts a purely subjectivist approach; I may call my slave whatever I like without consulting anyone. In the ensuing discussion Socrates shows that the notion of a purely private language is incoherent; language is a social activity. But this still leaves the obvious point that different societies have different languages. Is there any criterion by which we can decide that one is better than another?

At this point the argument is confused by a fallacy. Socrates argues that since statements clearly can be true or false, the same principle should apply to parts of statements, and therefore to names; thus there can be true and false names (385 c). We can show that this argument is unsound simply by extending it; names are composed of vowels and consonants; thus if Socrates is right, it must follow that individual letters can be true or false (1). Nevertheless the notion of a true name has interesting possibilities; it is suggested that some names actually 'reveal the essence' of the things they denote (393 d; cf. 422 d, 423 e). As a modern example, we might take the word 'wash-basin'; but later in the dialogue it is pointed out that such a name is instructive only if we know the meaning of its elements, 'wash' and 'basin'; it seems impossible to continue the process by finding significance in these elements themselves.

The discussion now turns to the process of devising or choosing names; it is suggested that they were introduced by some individual, the νομοθέτης, - or possibly by some group of talented men (401 b) - with an eye to their purpose and the objective reality to which they are directed. The idea that the invention of names demands an inventor is natural enough, though naive, and I cannot be sure how seriously Plato intends it; in Genesis 2:20 we find the same role assigned, no doubt seriously, to Adam. But the argument is repeatedly interrupted by parodies of absurd attempts to find significance in names by far-fetched etymologies, which in the last resort must be unhelpful even if they were sound, as we have just explained. Can we then discover some class of primary names which are significant in their own right? Socrates suggests that we can imitate the shapes and movements of things by gestures, and that human speech is a form of vocal gesture (426-7).

Cratylus now enters the discussion; he contends that a true name indicates the nature of a thing, but tries to argue that any other name must be a mere unmeaning noise. Socrates replies by recalling the picture-theory of naming; a portrait can be recognizable even if it is not 100 % perfect. We are then taken back to the theory of names as imitative

gestures; they can be appropriate to their subjects without matching them completely; thus the Greek word σκληρός, 'rough', contains the appropriate rough letter ρ, though the smooth λ figures in it as well. Socrates then introduces a dilemma, which leads to a point of great importance to later readers of the dialogue. Assuming a first inventor of language, he must have chosen his names in the light of a prior knowledge of the realities to which they apply; but how could he know them, if he had as yet no means of naming them? Cratylus replies by suggesting that some superhuman power introduced the original names. This point is very lightly sketched in (438 e; so previously, 397 c); indeed Socrates at once raises an objection; and the dialogue ends by making a point which Plato clearly considered more important, namely that we do have a knowledge of things which is not derived from names, for example true beauty and goodness; we are thus left ready to attend to the theory of Forms.

Having made this brief survey I will add one or two critical comments. First, some of the difficulties are misconceived, and arise from the introduction of a 'name-giver', with its corollary that the process of devising a set of names must be either wholly or largely completed within a single life-time. Given a longer time-span it becomes far easier to imagine the business of discriminating realities and naming them as two activities which go hand in hand and support one another. Secondly, the theory of language as imitative gesture is crude and inadequate, though we shall meet it again. And the notion that words are like pictures has the obvious drawback of suggesting that we use language only for making statements; we need a theory which can deal with questions, commands, and other sorts of discourse. Certainly the road sign which carries a picture of school-children conveys the injunction 'Beware of school-children'; but it is not clear that much further development is possible; language has developed into a flexible instrument whose resources far exceed those of pictures. Thirdly, even convenience or the reverse attaches to the whole structure of a language rather than to single words. There is certainly some inconvenience if it is really true that in Tonga the word for 'No' is 'Hoolima kittiluca chee-chee-chee'; but once again,

this is an exceptional case.

2. We pass then to Aristotle, who approaches the theory of language, inter alia, in two important early works, the Categories and the De Interpretatione. He sets out a distinction which is not always clear in Plato; the Categories is intended to deal with realities or notions or words taken separately, whereas the De Interpretatione is concerned with concepts or words connected to form a statement; thus a name is a spoken sound significant by convention (c.2, 16 a 19); but only a combination of names and verbs signifies something true or false (c.1, 16 a 15). There are a number of primitive features in Aristotle's treatment of language which were to cause difficulties to later commentators who took these words as authoritative. First, he is handicapped by an extremely limited understanding of grammar. Thus ὄνομα has to do duty both for what we call a noun and for a name; there is as yet no sign of a distinction between proper names and common nouns. Again, ὄνομα contrasts with ῥῆμα; but this contrast marks the distinction between what we call subject and predicate, whether the latter consists of a verb or of a descriptive term such as 'white' or introduces another noun, as in 'Homer is a poet'. Moreover Aristotle sometimes ignores this contrast and suggests that a statement simply involves the connecting, or indeed the unification, of two elements, as if these were symmetrically related; in other words, he often ignores the distinction which we now mark by saying that the subject-term refers to something, the predicate describes it. Again he says that spoken words are symbols of affections in the soul, and that written marks are symbols of spoken words. But this cuts across our well-founded conviction that the name Socrates stands for the man himself; for the name was given to him, and so not given to some person's idea or conception of him. Ideas and conceptions are no doubt involved in the process of giving names; but is not to them that the names are attached. In Christian societies, we baptise our children, not our thoughts.

All these points of course require much further discussion; but we must pass on, remembering chiefly that Aristotle is a decided advocate of the view that names

acquire their significance by convention.

3. The Stoics are said to have taken over the theory of names as imitative sounds, which we encountered in the Cratylus. (2) They are generally described as holding that names come into use by nature, φύσει; but perhaps their intention was to explain only the origin of language, since Chrysippus points out that in our common usage there is not always the natural correspondence that we might expect; for similar words denote dissimilar things and vice-versa. (3) But there are other more important and valuable aspects of Stoic philology. For one thing, they introduced a better classification of the parts of speech. Diogenes of Babylon mentions a five-fold division comprising ὄνομα προσηγορία ῥῆμα. σύνδεσμος and ἄρθρου. Here then we meet for the first time an explicit distinction between ὄνομα, the proper name, and προσηγορία, the common noun; this is said to have been introduced by Chrysippus, whereas the older Stoics distinguished only ὄνομα, ῥῆμα, σύνδεσμος, ἄρθρου. These four words in fact occur with others, in a list set down in Aristotle's Poetics, in which προσηγορία does not appear. Ῥῆμα now begins to take on the more restricted sense of the 'verb'; σύνδεσμος includes all indeclinable connecting words, i.e. particles, prepositions and conjunctions in our notation; ἄρθρου is what we call the article; there is no mention of pronouns, adjectives or adverbs.

An even more important innovation introduced by the Stoic is one whose full significance has only been appreciated fairly recently, namely their theory of λεκτά, for which we may use the word 'propositions'. Ancient sources explain their distinction between the significant sound and the fact ,πρᾶγμα, which it signifies; but this fact, or proposition is not identical with the objective reality, τὸ ἑκτὸς ὑποκείμενου which in this connection is called τὸ τυγχάνου, that which exists' or 'occurs'. (4) This can be clearly seen in a case like that of Socrates walking, since here we have three entities of strikingly different form: the sound-waves in the air, the predicative statement, and the human animal in motion. The distinction appears again in the tenet that the sounds and objects referred to are both

material, and therefore real, whereas the λεκτά, being immaterial, are not fully real. (5) It may also help to explain the puzzling distinction drawn by Seneca between sapientia and sapiens esse; sapientia being a collective noun referring to well-stocked minds in general, whereas sapiens esse means the fact that one or more people are wise. (6) We note that in the context of this theory, words are considered simply as individual acts of speaking, though elsewhere the Stoics have much to say about words in a purely formal context, as we have already made clear. Λεκτά, then, seems to be distinguishable from the words that express them, even though the distinction is quite often ignored. Translating λεκτόυ by the Latin word dictum certainly makes for confusion; but even dictum can be interpreted as 'that which is signified', not 'that which is pronounced'.

As usually presented, this theory retains the defect which we have already observed; it applies most easily to statements, and there are problems in extending it to deal with other uses of language. But it has important advantages. In the first place, it avoids the misleading suggestion that words are symbols of thoughts, which we noticed above; (7) 'misleading', that is, as a general doctrine; we shall not wish to deny that some words describe and refer to our thoughts. Secondly, it suggests, correctly, that the normal unit of discourse is the sentence, not the individual word. Aristotle had begun by considering words taken separately, and then explained how they can be combined to form a sentence; the Stoics keep their eyes on situations and the sentences that describe them. Detached parts of a sentence are called 'incomplete iekta', λεκτὰ ἐλλιπῆ; though here admittedly there is a danger of confusing the words with the meaning which they express.

The theory of λεκτά being immaterial is bound to raise problems about the effects they produce. The official Stoic view is that cause and effect are interactions of material things. But if we act on a command, we are responding, not to the sounds as such, but to the meaning which they convey, the immaterial λεκτόυ. There is an alternative Stoic treatment of causation which might provide the answer; if wood is burnt by fire, it is sometimes argued that both the

cause and thing affected are material, but the effect itself is not; the burning of the wood is a κατηγόρημα, a stateable fact, and as such immaterial (SVF 2.341). Perhaps, then, an immaterial fact of this kind could be produced by an immaterial λεκτόυ. But I think there is a deep-rooted confusion at this point. A changing substance is still a substance; for that matter, burning wood does not immediately cease to be wood. And if we speak of a fire, we are naming this process; our words denote a substance undergoing change, rather than simply expressing the stateable fact that it occurs. One can pick up a fire in a shovel: I do not see how one can shovel up a fact.

Despite all such embarrassments, it is clear that the Stoics have escaped from the narrow horizon of trying to explain language simply by accounting for names; they are concerned with situations and events, and are at least trying to distinguish these from the sentences which describe them. (8) A fortiori, they see the same individual can be referred to in different ways, (9) and thus either by giving his name ὄυομα, or by borrowing what is normally a descriptive term, a προσηγορία. If Alexander is king, it makes no difference whether we say 'Alexander is brave' or 'the king is brave'; but it does not follow from this that 'king' simply means the same as 'Alexander'; for 'the king of Persia' is a meaningful phrase; 'the Alexander of Persia' is not.

4. I think, then, that it is probably the Stoics who clarified the meaning of a term which plays an important part in the controversy aroused by Eunomius, namely the noun ἐπίυοια. The facts about this word are not very easy to discover, partly because the only available monograph, the little treatise published by Antonio Orbe in 1955, pays no attention to pre-Christian authors. In popular usage ἐπίυοια seems to have had the fairly ill-defined meaning of a thought or notion; it can also refer to a project, and it is worth noting that its one occurrence in the New Testament, at Acts 8:22, refers specifically to the wicked project entertained by Simon Magus. In some contexts it refers to the exercize of imagination, though this may be controlled by the intellect, and thus enable us to arrive at notions for which sensory

experience provides the material, though it is not properly speaking the cause of our thinking. The key passage here, given by von Arnim, SVF 2.87, is Diogenes Laertius 7.52. The same material is used with polemical intention by Sextus Empiricus adv.math. 8.56, and it seems that Eunomius independently drew on Diogenes, though his polemical aims are rather different from those of Sextus; see Gregory of Nyssa c.Eun. 2.179. Diogenes tells us that our conceptions, τὰ νοούμενα, are based either on experience, περίπτωσις, or on mental operations, which he enumerates, and which mostly involve easily intelligible modifications of experience: likeness, analogy, transposition, composition, opposition; thus by analogy we imagine giants and dwarfs; again, death is conceived as the opposite of life (though why?, one might ask; we can have a direct encounter with death). But we are then told that some things are conceived κατὰ μετάβασίν τινα, such as λεκτὰ and τόπος; these we note belong to the four phenomena which the Stoics describe as incorporeal, and therefore as not fully real (SVF 2.331). But they are not mere imaginary forms like centaurs or giants (ibid 332); they depend upon a sophisticated process of generalization and abstraction. It appears from Sextus that the phrase τὰ κατ'ἐπίνοιαν νοούμενα stands for the products of any such process, whether naive or sophisticated, as opposed to what is known from experience, τὸ κατὰ περίπτωσιν ἐγνωσμένον; for Sextus is concerned to make the fairly simple point that both our conceptions and our fanciful imaginations depend on sense-experience. Eunomius however wants to suggest that things qualified as κατ'ἐπίνοιαν are purely fanciful; he mentions only giants, dwarfs, many-headed monsters and half-beasts. This accords with the popular meaning of ἐπίνοια, but not with its technical usage, as we can see once again from Sextus 10.7, SVF 2.501; he tells us that if we imagine all (real) objects abolished, the space which contains them will still remain: κἄν κατ'ἐπίνοιαν δὲ ἅπαντα ἀνέλωμεν ὁ τόπος οὐκ ἀναιρεθήσεται ἐν ᾧ ἦν τὰ πάντα ἀλλ'ὑπομένει (ὑπομενεῖ?). This no doubt postulates an exercise of the imagination; but it is not idle or poetic fancy, but rather a disciplined thought-experiment.

The distinction between sense and reference which we

have ascribed to the Stoics becomes fairly clear in a much discussed passage of Posidonius, fr. 92 Edelstein = Diels DG 458; here it is said that οὐσία and ὕλη are identical κατὰ τὴν ὑπόστασιν and differ ἐπινοίᾳ μόνον. I think this must mean that the reference of the terms οὐσία and ὕλη is identical; they differ in sense, or in the description they convey. We learn from fr. 92 that οὐσία can mean existence as a whole, which neither increases nor diminishes, but merely suffers change; while fr. 5, if reliable, indicates that Posidonius thought of ὕλη as the passive ἄποιος οὐσία, distinguishable from the active principle within it. The argument, then, is that one and the same reality is called οὐσία in that it exists, and ὕλη in that it is liable to change.

5. We may now turn to Philo, who accepts the principle that one and the same thing can have various ἐπίνοιαι, and indeed gives it a theological application. The word itself is by no means infrequent; Lietzmann's index notes 26 instances, and there are others, less easy to trace, in the Quaestiones. In Philo's usage it very seldom refers to mere fantasy, like the invention of centaurs; there is just one possible example, at Migr. 192; God's mind really does pervade the universe, unlike man's, which can only travel round it in imagination, ἐπινοίᾳ μόνον. By far the commonest meaning is a project, or the means chosen to attain it, and not infrequently a wicked project, like that of the tower-builders of Babel, Confus. 158, Somn. 2.285; but sometimes an admirable human skill, like that of the ship-builder, Spec. Leg. 1.335. Sometimes ἐπίνοια denotes theoretical knowledge; it can refer to organized research, Somn. 1.39, or again to the knowledge of medicine, Exsecr. 145. This leaves three contexts to be considered, of which by far the most important is Heres 23. Here Philo explains that God, as indicated by ὁ αἴτιος, has two appelations (προσρήσεις), namely θεός and κύριος: but in the text under discussion, Gen. 15:2, the word δεσπότης is used; and κύριος and δεσπότης are said to be synonymous. Philo then continues: ἀλλ'εἰ τὸ ὑποκείμενον ἓν καὶ ταυτόν ἐστιν, ἐπινοίαις αἱ κλήσεις διαφέρουσι. the two titles differ in their descriptive force, κύριος signifying firmness or validity (κῦρος) and δεσπότης implying a bond, δεσμός, which

again suggests δέος, fear. The picture is complicated, and we should not assume that the two terms κύριος and δεσπότης have the same relationship as θεός and κύριος. This latter pair are of course related to the one and only God, but as Philo tells us elsewhere they name two distinct powers; whereas κύριος and δεσπότης are alternative titles for one of these powers, and it is this that is indicated by saying τὸ ὑποκείμενον ἓν καὶ ταὐτόν ἐστιν. However at Qu.Ex. 2.63 the word ἐπίνοια seems to mark a contrast between the two primary powers themselves, here described as 'the creative' and 'the royal' powers; for the Greek fragment reads: πρεσβυτέρα δὲ ἡ ποιητικὴ τῆς βασιλικῆς κατ᾽ἐπίνοιαν. (As a rough parallel, we might imagine an English aristocrat who has inherited or obtained two distinct titles, one of them more dignified or actually more ancient than the other, though of course there is no difference in the age of the man himself). Thirdly, at Spec. Leg. 2.29 we are told that ὁ τῆς φύσεως ὀρθὸς λόγος has the function both of a father and of a husband, πατρὸς ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀνδρὸς ἔχει δύναμιν, ἐπινοίαις διαφόροις, in that he both implants the seeds of virtue in the soul and procreates good designs and actions, which he subsequently nourishes with refreshing doctrines, ποτίμοις δόγμασιν. The language is largely Stoic, especially the phrase ὁ ὀρθὸς λόγος: the sequence ὁ τῆς φύσεως ὀρθὸς λόγος is repeated at Opif. 143, which makes the conventional Stoic comparison of the cosmos with a well-governed city; and the Stoics of course described the Logos as σπερματικός, though I have not so far discovered parallels to Philo's vivid images of its intercourse with the individual soul. Plutarch also quotes from Chrysippus a reference to ὁ κοινὸς τῆς φύσεως λόγος, which is identified with εἱμαρμένη and πρόνοια and Zeus (SVF 2.937); no doubt the theory of ἐπίνοιαι will have been employed in making these equations.

At all events, Philo clearly understands that one and the same reality can be referred to by alternative designations which describe its activity under different aspects or by different metaphors.

6. Our account so far may have suggested a continuous process of improvement and clarification in terminology; but from about Philo's time onwards we have to recognize an influence which continually threatens to obscure the results so laboriously achieved; I refer to the influence of classicism, the view that all important knowledge and understanding had already been discovered by the ancients, and the further disposition to select among ancient authors on the score of literary merit. The Cratylus of Plato and the Categories and De Interpretatione of Aristotle now come to be regarded as standard authorities; Aristotle's Topics also gains more influence than it deserves. Thus the important progress made by the Stoics in understanding the way in which language is significant tends to be overshadowed by a return to the old problem, do names acquire their meaning by nature or by convention? What we commonly find is a compromise theory, that names are indeed to be traced to an original name-giver, but that he selected the names that had a natural appropriateness to their objects. But here the argument all too often stops short, without attempting to enquire what makes names naturally appropriate. Philo thus argues that Moses did better than the Greeks in attributing the origin of language, not simply to wise men, but to the first man created; (10) 'for if many persons had assigned things their names, these would have been inconsequent and ill-matched.... whereas naming by one man was likely to harmonize with the reality, and this would be a consistent symbol for all men of the fact or the thing signified', τοῦ τυγχάνοντος ἢ τοῦ σημαινομένου, the phrases which we have already seen in use among the Stoics.

7. To this theory of the giving of names there is of course one major exception, the name of God himself, if it is right to call it a name. This, it is clear, can only be known because God himself has revealed it. But what exactly has he revealed? Philo's difficulty is obvious. On the one hand, he knows that God has a name which must not be spoken, 'except by those whose tongue is purified by wisdom in the holy place', Vit. Mos. 2.114, and that this name is signified by four Hebrew characters; he most probably did not know how these should be pronounced. (11) On the other hand, in

Philo's Greek Bible, Moses asks God for his name, and is given the reply Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν (Ex. 3:14); though an alternative is immediately suggested: 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham... this is my name for ever'. We cannot say that ὁ Ὤν functions for Philo as a proper name; indeed he says explicitly that God has no need of a name (Abr. 51); but he clearly regards it as a uniquely appropriate and revealing title. Let us note that all other appelations which we find applied to God are in one place or another referred by Philo not to God himself, but to one of his δυνάμεις. This is certainly true of the titles θεός, κύριος, βασιλεύς, ποιήτης, δημιουμγός ἄρχων ευεργέτης, and I think of ἀρχή. But the phrase ὁ Ὤν is never identified with a δύναμις; it has δυνάμεις assigned to it. We must not enlarge on Philo's theory of God's δυνάμεις, which has often been described; in his view, God is perfectly simple, but has many δυνάμεις; the intellectual apparatus for this doctrine is drawn from the Greek debate as to whether we can consistently describe the soul, or the mind, as simple, and also as having parts; i.e., can we harmonize the Phaedo with the Republic? A commonly-accepted view was that the soul is simple, but has various functions, which can be described as δυνάμεις, or again as in later Christian theology, as ἐνέργειαι.

Philo can therefore be said to anticipate Eunomius in one respect, namely that he selects one title as uniquely appropriate and indicative of God's nature. In other respects he is of course poles apart. Although he comments on this title, he also explains that God is 'unnameable and indescribable and incomprehensible'. It is presumably because ὁ Ὤν is a completely general expression that he describes God himself - as distinct from his Logos - as 'supremely general', γενικώτατος, and so comparable with the word τί, which for the Stoics included things that were not even real (Leg.All. 2.86). Philo's language, however, is controlled by the metaphysics of the Platonists, for whom 'being' is a value term, and distinct varieties of being arise by some form of limitation ot qualification, rather as we now realize that colours are derived from plain white light. We therefore have the paradox that the purely abstract and uninformative term is considered appropriate to denote the

inexhaustible riches of the supreme reality, of which all beauty and perfection that we can observe is only a derivative of inferior rank.

There is of course one further question to be raised here. Philo refers to the supreme being both as ὁ ὤν and as τὸ ὄν - he will not unfortunately delight those friends of ours who think he should have used the designation ἡ οὖσα! Are we to say that the notion of pure Being is in some way qualified by the expression ὁ ὤν, where the masculine gender imports some suggestion of male, and therefore personal, being, which is appropriate when we read of God speaking, and therefore revealing himself to man? Or shall we say that it merely neutralizes the opposite suggestion of impersonal, and so possibly sub-personal, being, which is encouraged by τὸ ὄν, and perhaps also affects the use of phrases like τὸ θεῖον as opposed to ὁ θεός? I do not know how to answer this question. I slightly prefer the first alternative. In Greek usage, of course, it is by no means true that the masculine gender applies only to human males, and the neuter only to inanimate objects; nevertheless the use of the neuter to denote males is a little unusual; men's names are usually masculine in form; the neuter being used not uncommonly for women's names, and of course for diminutives.

Having dealt as best I can with Philo's usage, I would like to continue by tracing the use of the word ἐπίνοια down to the Fourth Century. But time does not allow this; and I must offer some general comments on the logic of nomenclature. But there is one passage which is important enough to deserve mention even in the briefest sketch of the patristic evidence, namely Origen Comm.Jo. 1.20.119, ὁ θεὸς μὲν οὖν πάντη ἕν ἐστι καὶ ἁπλοῦν; ὁ δὲ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν διὰ τὰ πολλά, ἐπεὶ προέθετο αὐτὸν ὁ θεὸς ἱλαστήριον καὶ ἀπαρχὴν πάσης τῆς κτίσεως, πολλὰ γίνεται κτλ. In the event, of course, it proves that the Logos has several distinct roles, for which Origen uses the term ἐπίνοιαι, quite apart from the various good offices which he undertakes for the salvation of men; a suggested list is σοφία, λόγος, ζωή and perhaps ἀλήθεια. The strong declaration that God himself, ὁ θεός,

is totally one and simple may perhaps have helped to convince Eunomius that only one designation for him is allowable. But this of course is not Origen's view; he argues that one and the same being is δημιουργός and θεός and πατήρ, both of Christ and of ourselves, and is at least prepared to consider the argument that the titles πατήρ and θεός indicate distinct ἐπίνοιαι; Comm.Jo. 19.5 init. We may note that in his use of ἐπίνοια Eusebius conforms fairly closely to Origen (E.T. 2.10.6, 14.22), and Arius appears to do so too (Ath. syn. 15); whereas Athanasius replies by treating ἐπίνοια as a word reserved for mere fancies or fabrications, and to this extent prepares the way for Eunomius.

8. I return at last, then, to my ostensible subject, 'Logic and the application of names to God'. What are we to understand by the word 'names'? In the broadest sense ὄνομα can be equivalent to our word 'noun', and thus include common nouns or descriptive terms, more accurately distinguished by the words προσηγορίαι and προσρήσεις. From these we can distinguish proper nouns or proper names; but we note at the outset that these are not necessarily personal names; there are names of countries, like Sicily, and of mountains, like Etna. Indeed in some ways these are less problematic; it may well be that the island of Sicily is the only country to which this name is attached; whereas in human socities a personal name can only pick out its owner within his immediate circle; there are simply not enough names in existence to give each individual in the world a name of his own. But in discussing personal names we commonly keep up the fiction that someone's name really is a proper name in the sense of being peculiar to him. And we have to recognize another fiction encouraged by the Greek phrase κύριου ὄνομα, namely that a person's name in some way not only denotes that one individual, but correctly describes him. This is a state of affairs which we should find it very difficult to bring about, even if we tried to do so, where names are normally assigned to individuals before their character developes. We could I think imagine providing somebody with a nickname which really was peculiar to him and was also significant to the extent of alluding to some outstanding

feature of his appearance or his character. Fictional characters, of course, do have names which are significant and possibly unique; Medusa, the cunning one, Prometheus, the forward-looking; and returning to real life, of course it could have been the case that Xenophon's friend Cheirisophus really was clever with his hands, or even received this name as a sobriquet when his skill was discovered. What is impossible in the case of human beings or islands or mountains is to provide a name from which all their characteristics can be deduced, as we might claim for geometrical figures like the triangle; but ancient theorists, under Plato's influence, are often haunted by the ghost of this possibility.

In primitive societies it seems that no embarrassment was felt in designating gods by personal names. The early Israelites named their own God Jahweh, and were quite prepared to acknowledge Chemosh as the god of the Ammonites and therefore no concern of theirs. It would need an Old Testament specialist to tell us precisely why the name Jahweh came to be regarded as too sacred to pronounce. A tentative answer might be that the worshippers of Jahweh were concerned that he should be properly honoured, i.e. concerned about his 'name' in the sense of his reputation, and indeed attributed a similar concern to Jahweh himself; so that the phrase 'his name' came to indicate his real character, and also to be used as a reverential expression for the divinity. But there may well be a different explanation for the avoidance of the actual name 'Jahweh', as opposed to the descriptive expression 'his name'; for we normally apply names to familiar things like persons and places. The Israelites may well have felt that to provide the God of all the universe with a name was to assimilate him to the cultic gods of the heathen. More generally, we might suppose that it is normally the function of a personal name to pick out an individual within a class of similar beings; in this case, to apply a personal name to God would be to suggest that he is not unique. This would go some way to explain the special appeal of a distinctively mysterious phrase like 'I am' or 'He Who Is'.

9. But we need to come back to Eunomius; for it is clear that the controversy which he prompted does not turn on personal names; the question at issue is rather, whether there is some one descriptive term for God which enjoys a privileged status. Eunomius made this claim for the word ἀγέννητος. His argument, I think, must be that God is perfectly simple as regards his essence, though he has various operations, powers, and energies. He can therefore have only one proper designation; if more than one term were applied to his essential nature, this would inevitably imply that there were distinguishable aspects of his essence named by the different terms, so that it would be no longer simple. I find this argument unconvincing; and I think it can be answered even without appealing to Basil's theory of ἐπίνοιαι; for it seems to imply that the actual word ἀγέννητος is indispensable. Would Eunomius then insist that no Latin or Persian speaker can hold correct theological views? But if ἀγέννητος can be translated, why should one refuse to admit that it can be replaced in Greek by a synonym which is equally capable of representing God's perfectly simply essential nature? It may be answered, perhaps, that there is no perfectly adequate synonym; but then, clearly, there is no perfectly adequate translation either. Eunomius therefore has to choose; either he must insist that Greek is the only language in which theology can be acceptably stated, or he must admit that roughly synonymous expressions may be admitted, with all the risk of a variation of nuance which would compromise the divine simplicity. The word ἀρχή, for instance, might be suggested as an appropriate synonym.

Eunomius could answer, of course, that ἀρχή will not do, since it has a wide range of applications; whereas, in his own time and milieu at least, it could be argued that ἀγέννητος - spelt with νν - was only used in connection with the divinity. And its compound, negative form does give it a certain advantage over other descriptive terms. If we take a word such as ποιητής, it could be argued that we only learn the use of this word by meeting it in ordinary contexts, and that therefore it must have associations which render it unfit for describing the unique source of all life and being. But this argument ignores the flexibility which our

language displays, and the extent to which it is affected by its context. What is normally a descriptive term, 'the X', can often be understood as 'the X to which it is proper to refer in this context'; within a family, for instance, the word 'Father' quite properly means 'the father of this family', without any sense of a conflict with its use as a common noun. A more sophisticated variant of this is the case where 'the X' denotes some individual κατ' ἐξοχήν, as Aquinas refers to Aristotle, calling him philosophus, 'the philosopher'. This logic governs our use of the word 'God'; we learn the use of the word partly by learning what characteristics various societies ascribe to their gods; at a later stage we refine our conception, and also understand that the being who fulfils our specification must be unique. 'I believe in one God', we then say, thereby excluding the conceptual possibility of a plurality of gods. It may still be true, however, that this excluded possibility has played a part in our coming to understand the word 'God'.

10 Eunomius, I think, makes two distinguishable errors. The first is to say that only one term is properly applicable to God, as signifying his essence. The second is to suggest that this term ἀγέννητος, is proper in the sense of giving a complete specification of what is comprised in the being of God. This latter point is so generally condemned that I shall not enlarge on it. The former point has rather more basis in tradition; thus Philo maintains that the phrase ὁ Ὤν is not really a name, since there is no name at all which properly applies to God - οὐδὲν ὄνομα τὸ παράπαν ἐπ' ἐμοῦ κυριολογεῖται ᾧ μόνῳ πρόσεστι τὸ εἶναι. But Philo does not develope this last phrase; on the contrary, as we have seen, he pictures God as revealing a name to men, and also as exercizing a variety of functions, δυνάμεις, in virtue of which we may use names like κύριος and θεός. Unfortunately these powers often appear to detach themselves as autonomous beings like the angels, who are at least theoretically able to escape from God's control, like the Aeons of the Gnostics. At this point a better picture is already outlined by Justin (Apol. 2.6.2): 'the Father of all has no given name, being ingenerate', since, he adds rather naively, this would imply some more senior divinity who gave him such a name; 'but "Father" and "God" and "Creator" and "Lord" and "Master" are not names, but appellations (προσρήσεις)

derived from his beneficent actions'. Basil and Gregory follow, broadly speaking, in this track, and in this respect I have no fault to find with them. I am uneasy with regard to one assumption, which I think they share with Eunomius, namely that a perfectly simple being can exercize a plurality of operations or energies. I can see no way of construing the term 'simple' which would make this intelligible, let alone squaring with the Biblical tradition. But this enormously important question must be set aside. Possibly the nature of divinity itself requires that it should not be answerable, and we must end by confessing, omnia exeunt in mysterium.

1. Plato himself later corrected the fallacy; see Theaetetus 203.
2. SVF 2.146, = Origen Cels. 1.24; cf. 2.895.
3. SVF 2.151.
4. SVF 2.166; and for λεκτά = πράγματα, 3 Diog. 20 ad fin. The same threefold distinction is expressed rather differently by Origen, Philocalia 4; here the terms used are φωυή, σημαιυόμευα, and πράγματα καθ'ὧυ κεῖυται τά σημαιυόμευα ; cf. also SVF 2.168.
5. SVF 2.166, 170, 331.
6. Ep. 117 (not in SVF); but cf. 2.132.
7. Cf. SVF 2.167 with the misleading 168.
8. Cf. SVF 2.171.
9. SVF 2.151.
10. Opif 148, Leg.All. 2.14 f., Mut.Nom. 63f.; contrast, however, Vit.Mos. 1.130, Decal. 23.
11. Cf. Vit. Mos. 115 init: τετραγράμματου δὲ τοὔυομά φησιυ ὁ θεολόγος εἶυαι.

Divine simplicity as a problem for orthodoxy

'The evolution of orthodoxy' might easily be understood as a process which belongs wholly to the past: the development of Christian doctrine, on which Henry Chadwick has shed such a graceful and penetrating light, would then be contrasted with a complete and stable construction in which Christianity has come to rest. But to call it complete and stable need not mean that further progress is excluded; at the very least, new challenges are likely to arise, and old truths will need to be re-stated. And most of our generation, and of our juniors, will think this programme far too tame: in their eyes, only an obstinate and secluded mind will persist in defending an orthodoxy that is purely static. I for one would certainly wish to see its evolution as a continuing process, in which established positions need to be clarified and some false steps retracted, in the faith that a better grounded and better articulated consensus of belief may be attained.

From such a standpoint one can turn with a rueful admiration to a handbook which has given invaluable service to a succession of beginners in theology, the *Enchiridion Patristicum* of M. J. Rouet de Journel, completed in 1911 and appearing in its twenty-fourth edition in 1969. The learned author has collected over 2,400 brief passages from the Fathers, and offers a guide to his selection in an 'Index Analyticus', arranged so as to suggest that the Fathers prospectively uphold the entire structure of modern catholic orthodoxy as defined in the tradition of St. Thomas Aquinas. As article 97, we find the heading *Deus est simplicissimus, ita ut nullum omnino admittat compositionem*. The authorities cited include Tertullian, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nyssa, John Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine and Cyril: and most of them, it must be said, are consonant with the author's formulation and seem to have no reservations about the black-and-white antithesis, simple or composite, on which it is based.

I shall submit that this is an over-simplification: we must not think that simplicity is itself a simple notion. But how else can one explain the fact that the theme of divine simplicity has been so little discussed? It figures, no doubt, in text-books of dogmatic theology: but I cannot discover that much detailed attention has been given to the actual usage of the key words *haplous* and *haplotēs* or to their Latin equivalents. The entry in H. J. Sieben's *Voces* makes it appear that simplicity has been examined only in its guise as a moral virtue, in which a modest disposition is expressed in truthful unaffected language and unassuming reliability of conduct. The article 'Einfalt' in the *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* surveys much the same ground. Nevertheless there are some unexpected features in the philosophical use of the words for simplicity, and some transitions of thought which I believe cannot bear the weight that has been put upon them.

We may begin by taking an example of the standard exposition from Gregory Nazianzen's *Second Theological Oration* (*Oratio* 28), 7 (not included in the *Enchiridion*):

> For what will you conceive the Deity to be, if you rely on all methods of reason? A body? How then is he infinite and boundless and formless and intangible and invisible? For how shall he be an object of worship if he be circumscribed? Or how shall he escape being compounded out of elements and resolved into them again, or indeed totally dissolved? For composition is a source of conflict, and conflict of separation, and this again of dissolution; and dissolution is totally foreign to God and to the first nature. So there can be no separation, to exclude dissolution: no conflict, to exclude separation; no composition, to exclude conflict; and therefore He is not a body, to exclude composition. So the argument is established by going back from the last to the first.

The rhetorical and allusive style which Gregory adopts, while addressing a largely uninstructed congregation, shows that he takes his argument to be thoroughly established and familiar. The word *haplous* does not in fact appear in this passage, but Gregory makes his point clearly enough by saying that God is 'not compounded of elements' (*ek stoicheiōn sugkeisthai*) and is immune from composition (*sunthesis*); composition would imply conflict (*machē*). The mention of conflict suggests that Gregory is using 'elements' in the fairly precise sense to indicate the traditional four, earth, air, fire and water, which were thought to display contrary qualities, hot and cold, wet and dry: it was a favourite topic of Christian apologetics to say that God's wisdom is manifested in the art with which he combined potentially discordant elements into an harmonious world order.[1] One feature of the traditional

construction which Gregory omits is the doctrine that God is strictly immutable: but this is commonly based on a rather different understanding of 'composite being', in which change is explained as a rearrangement of the minute particles, atoms or otherwise, of which material things are composed: thus also they would come to an end when their constituents lose their cohesion and are absorbed into the surrounding matter. Conversely, if God is not composed of such particles, he is immune from change. This argument can easily be illustrated (e.g. Athanasius *Contra gentes* 41, *De decretis* 11); but it is not easy to see why change or dissolution should result from *conflict* among minute bodies such as atoms: one would rather think of a failure to cohere or to maintain their orderly disposition. This may already suggest that the orthodox case is not quite so simple and straightforward as appears at first glance.

The origins of this train of thought are clearly pre-Christian, and illustrations can be found in Philo; but for the moment I will postpone this enquiry, and consider some other, and less rigorous interpretations of simplicity which entered the Christian tradition.

(1) First of all, a student of Aristotle cannot read far without encountering the phrase 'simple bodies', *hapla sōmata*. 'Simple' in this connection means that they do not consist of other elements which could exist separately. The last four words are important, since the four elements, which are simple bodies in this sense, were thought to result from the imposition of qualities on formless matter (see e.g. Hippolytus, *Refutatio omnium haeresium* 1 19 1 for a doxographic account): but this is a purely theoretical analysis, as one cannot actually find matter existing without qualities, or vice versa, to use as ingredients which could actually be combined or compounded. Further, 'simple bodies' have no structure or pattern; or more exactly, to say that they are simple makes no stipulations about their location or distribution. It follows that things which are simple in this sense need not be indivisible; the element fire, for example, appears in a multitude of separate places, in the stars, for instance, and in a modified form in animal bodies. Arius Didymus mentions the division of simple bodies.[2]

Within the Christian tradition this usage is best illustrated by Tertullian, who of course makes use of stoic teaching on matter and its qualities. The Stoics held that the elements can change one into another (*SVF* 2 413 etc.), so that none of them is imperishable except the fire from which they originate and to which they return; while in the short

run it is admitted that fire itself can be extinguished and 'die' (ibid. 430, 446). The whole process is controlled by 'spirit', *pneuma* (ibid. 416), whose status is unclear; it is sometimes identified as a separate element (ibid.), sometimes as fire (ibid. 421–3) or a compound of air and fire (ibid. 439–41); but in each case it functions as the rational directive process in the universe, or God (ibid. 1045). God, then, is in some sense simple (*suneches*), but is not unchangeable.

These doctrines appear with some variation in Tertullian's teaching about the soul. He takes it for granted that the soul is immortal; but if indissoluble, it must be indivisible, and therefore simple (*singularis et simplex*, *De anima* 14). But it is only simple in a very large and loose sense; Tertullian immediately notes that it is commonly divided into 'parts'; though these are more properly called 'faculties' or 'powers' (*huiusmodi autem non tam partes animae habebuntur quam vires et efficaciae et operae*, ibid. 14.3). On the other hand he believes that the soul is corporeal and has a shape conforming to that of the body (ibid. 9); it is hard to see how it can fail to have 'parts' in the sense of limbs and other members; and if so, it is 'simple' in a much weaker sense even than 'simple bodies' like fire or spirit. Moreover Tertullian, while repeating that the soul is *substantia simplex* (22.2), also insists that it is subject to change (21); otherwise there could be no possibility of human free will. One might compare the stoic doctrines that both God and the soul are 'spirit' (*SVF* 2.1035) and that God is subject to change (ibid. 1045, 1049ff.); though on the latter point Tertullian dissents and takes the normal view: only God is unchangeable (*De anima* 21.7).

In other respects, however, Tertullian stands apart from the main tradition, and I am not clear that the Fathers commonly understood the simplicity of God on the analogy of simple bodies. It might certainly have provided an answer to anthropomorphic theories; the idea that God had man-like limbs and features could be contradicted by picturing him as uniformly distributed through the universe, and Augustine tells us that he came to rest for a time in a conception of this sort (*Confessiones* 7.1.1–2). Again it might seem a natural deduction from the statements that God is light, and fire, and spirit (1 John 1:5, Deuteronomy 4:24, John 4:24); but in a well-known passage (*De principiis* 1.1.4) Origen explains that these words are not to be interpreted in physical terms, and he could probably count on general agreement. Some suggestion of the 'simple bodies' interpretation might be found in Eusebius, who argues (*Demonstratio evangelica* 4.15.16) that God's simple, uncompounded and unmixed nature may be symbolized by the simple 'oil of gladness' with

which Christ is anointed (Psalm 44:8 LXX) whereas God's many powers and functions are suggested by the composite ointment (*muron*) prescribed for the priests in Exodus 30:22ff. But the physical implication is not to be taken seriously, any more than the suggestion that God's will is, so to speak, the matter and substance from which the universe is derived. In Eusebius' view God is a unity, *monas* – indeed he surpasses the monad as the source of all creation (ibid. 4.1.5); and in a later work, the *Ecclesiastical Theology* (2.14.6) Eusebius insists on the absolute simplicity of the divine being.

(2) Tertullian's opinion that the soul is a simple substance but is also subject to change could be endorsed by many thinkers, both Christian and pagan, who would not accept his peculiar doctrine of a corporeal soul. It seems likely, in fact, that the whole argument about the simplicity of God begins with a debate about the soul, in which Plato played the leading part. In the *Phaedo* 78a, he draws a distinction between composite things and those that are uncompounded (*axunthetos*), and argues that it is the former that are liable to change, whereas absolute essences, for instance of beauty or equality, persist unchanging. But the soul is akin to these realities; it is 'most like the divine and immortal and intellectual and uniform (*monoeidēs*) and indissoluble and unchanging' (ibid. 80b). The natural inference would be that the soul can properly be described as simple. On the other hand, in the *Phaedrus* and the *Republic* he introduces the well-known theory of three elements in the soul: it can be compared with the 'composite force' (*sumphutō(i) dunamei*) of a pair of winged horses and their charioteer, which represent desire, impulsiveness and reason (*Phaedrus* 246A). Plato is very sparing with technical terms; he does not refer to 'parts' of the soul, but to 'natures' (*phuseis*) or 'forms of being' (*eidē*) which are not 'identical in nature' (*homophuēs*: *Republic* 439e, 440c, 441a). However, since he introduces the discussion by asking whether we learn and lust and rage with three distinct 'things' (*trisin ousin*, cf. *tritō(i) tini*) or with the whole soul – 436a – it was natural to represent him as analysing it into three parts. Finally, a perplexing passage in *Republic* 10, 611a–d suggests that the description of the soul as simple only applies to its ideal condition or 'truest nature' (*tē(i) alēthestatē(i) phusei*); in its actual state, as manifested in disorderly chatacters, it is truly described as composite, and not even well compounded (611b and c).

Aristotle makes it clear that in his day there was a debate as to whether one should refer to 'parts' of the soul (*merē*, *moria*) or regard it as

undivided but exercising a variety of functions, *dunameis*.[3] The latter opinion seems to have gained ground; at any rate Galen reports that both Aristotle and Posidonius preferred to speak of 'powers' in the soul rather than 'parts';[4] but arguments about 'parts' of the soul continued, at least in the doxographic literature,[5] and are frequent in Philo.[6] Posidonius accepted Plato's threefold analysis and claimed the support of Cleanthes,[7] whereas Chrysippus apparently adopted an intellectualist theory which regarded emotions as judgments[8] and so thought of all the operations of the soul as proceeding from a single source. Posidonius complains that Chrysippus' language is confused, but Tertullian is probably mistaken in saying that he reckoned eight parts in the soul; this was a common Stoic opinion, but not that of Chrysippus himself.

In the later tradition opinion seems to have veered to the view that is it correct to speak of 'powers' of the soul rather than 'parts'; so Tertullian, as noted above: Galen, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Calcidius 223, Porphyry and Severus, in Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica*, 13 17 6, all noted by J. H. Waszink[9]; Iamblichus is inconsistent, but on the whole prefers 'powers'.[10]

Meanwhile it had become customary to apply the same principle to the divinity; Philo draws a parallel between our mind and the divine one (*ho huper hēmas*), explaining that both are without parts and undivided (*quis rerum divinarum heres*? 234–6); but this apparently applies to our mind only, as distinct from other 'parts' of the soul.[11] Philo seems to speak of such 'parts' without embarrassment; but his enumeration of these parts can be precisely paralleled in terms of 'powers', seven lower powers plus the reason (*De mutatione nominum* 110–11). But God is a whole in which there are no parts (*De posteritate Caini* 3–4, *Mut. nom.* 184); moreover to speak of parts would suggest the picture of a God in human form, which the scriptures introduce only as a concession to human weakness (*De somniis* 1 234–6). It follows that God must be seen as operating through his powers.

A similar parallel between God and the human mind could be drawn by considering not their constitution but their operations. It is a commonplace that the mind does not impair its own power by expressing itself in words or by making an act of will (so e.g. Philo, *De gigantibus* 25). In the same way Christian theologians could argue that the divine Logos proceeds from the Father without any loss or division, as spoken Word or as expressing the Father's will (Justin, *Dialogus* 61 and 128, Tatian, *Ad. Graecos* 5 1, Theophilus, *Ad. Autolycum* 2.22 etc.) 'without cutting off any part of the mind' (Origen, *De principiis* 1.2.6).

This notion of 'undiminished giving', accepted also by neo-Platonist philosophers,[12] has been much discussed, and probably needs no further illustration.

From the above reflections it would seem that there are radical defects in the neat antithesis of simple and compound which is presupposed by Gregory and has been adopted by orthodox Christian theologians. For, in the first place, an object which has no parts need not be wholly undifferentiated; it might have distinguishable features, like the colours of a rainbow, which could not properly be described as parts (whether we think of the colours themselves, or of the coloured areas which merge one into the other). Again, if an object consists of parts, it does not follow that it is constructed by assembling those parts: a tree has a trunk, branches, and twigs, but it is not brought into being by taking those parts and putting them together, as a house is built by collecting and then assembling bricks, beams and roofing tiles in the appropriate order. And the converse is also probable; it is not intuitively obvious that physical objects can only perish by the separation of their parts; why should not some things simply fade away, like a spark? Again, a tree may die without its branches falling apart from the trunk; this will occur later, it may be, when both have begun to rot; the *total* dispersal of its constituent atoms will take still longer.

Where the soul is concerned, it seems reasonable to use the comparison of a natural organism; and the Stoics may have partly seen this possibility, even though they expressed it in the rather absurd form (as we would think) that the universe is a rational animal;[13] for they represented the cosmos as an organic whole whose parts reacted one upon another by 'sympathy',[14] and taught that there is an analogy between the cosmos and man, who can be called a 'little universe' or 'microcosm'.[15]

On the other hand it would seem that a soul which exercises a variety of powers cannot be simple in any very rigorous sense; for if they are to be powers *of* the soul, rather than autonomous agencies that just happen to sympathize with its activities, there must be modifications in the soul which explain why it exercises one power rather than another on a given occasion or towards a particular object. This will be true, I think, whether the powers are seen as truly intrinsic to the soul or as semi-independent auxiliaries; if such auxiliaries merely go into action on behalf of a rigorously simple soul, the soul itself is not acting.[16] And the same should be true of God, whose action is sometimes seen as delegated to quasi-independent powers or even to angels, who can act on a lower

level (Philo, *De opificio mundi* 74–5!), misunderstand their instructions or even rebel (*Gig.* 6.17). There is of course the alternative of supposing that all God's powers are mutually compatible, and that he exercises them all perpetually.[17] And this view can be advocated in impressive terms; God confronts us in a single undifferentiated blaze of majesty and mercy by which we are both humbled and uplifted. But this can only be made convincing if stated as a generality; we have no grounds for believing that 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble'; we have to say that the proud are frustrated because they miss their way to the goal which would truly satisfy them, and, more sadly, that the humble are uplifted if they can find the confidence to overcome their dejection. The identity of God's attributes and powers cannot be combined with a genuine doctrine of particular providence.

(3) One reason why simplicity is easily misconstrued is that it is one possible interpretation of the notion of unity, and is liable to be influenced by its neighbours. In my book *Divine Substance*, pp. 180–93, I referred to three interpretations of unity which can be labelled by the catchwords *unicus*, *simplex*, *constans* (or *immutabilis*). It might have been helpful to have added a fourth, namely *primus*, to take note of the view, probably Pythagorean in origin, that the structure of the universe can be explained in terms of numbers, and that numbers derive from the One, which is therefore the origin of all things.

Why 'probably' Pythagorean? Because Aristotle, our most reliable witness, represented them as teaching that the One is derivative; see *Metaphysica* A 5, 987 a 13ff – they reach *two* first principles – and *Ethica Nicomachea* A 4, 1096 b 5, they place the One in the column of goods (and so not at its head). But contrast *Metaphysica* A 6, 987 b 23ff: Plato said, like the Pythagoreans, that numbers are to other things the cause of their being, but differed from them in postulating a dyad *instead of the unlimited as a unity*. Probably, then, some members of the school reckoned the monad as the first principle. Among later critics, Aetius seems to make them teach two principles, of which however the monad has the active and formative role and is identified as God;[18] in Hippolytus' account the monad is the sole source (*Refutatio omnium haeresium* 1.2.6). Philo refers to God as monad (e.g. *quod Deus immutabilis sit*, 11, *heres* 183), but also teaches that the monad merely symbolizes God (*Legum allegoriae* 2.3, *De specialibus legibus* 3 180, cf. *De praemiis et poenis* 40); the dyad is, or symbolizes, created and divisible matter (*Somn.* 2.70, *Spec. leg.* 3 180) and is given a radically inferior dignity.

To resume: if we now consider a scheme involving four members, *primus*, *unicus*, *simplex*, *constans*, it will be difficult to resist the claims of two other candidates, namely *bonus* and *verus*, since these constantly figure in ancient discussions in conjunction with the notion of unity. Plato for instance argues that a god must be both simple and unchanging, and sees immunity from change as a sign of goodness (*Rep.* 2 380 d–e). Aristotle discusses the relation between unity and truth, without it seems reaching a final conclusion. On the one hand he asserts that knowledge implies an identity – at least an identity of form – between the mind and its object (*De anima* 3 5, 430 a 20 etc.); on the other hand *both truth and falsity* entail a composition of thoughts into a unity (ibid. 3.6, 430 a 27–8); or, with a different emphasis, both truth and falsehood involve a combination of notions (432 a 12).

In theory, it would be an admirable project to consider the logical relations between the six attributes we have named. In practice, it would be an impossibly complex task. A set of six members exhibits $6 \times 5 = 30$ possible combinations, and each of these would have to be tested in both directions; if a, then b; but also, if b, then a. But what finally puts this project out of court is the fact that several, and possibly all, of the attributes in question have been understood and explained in different ways by different writers. We have been considering simplicity; but this is a minuscule discussion compared with the vast literature devoted to the nature of goodness, and to theories of truth.

It is possible, however, to say something about the logical links which were thought to connect simplicity in particular with its neighbours; and I would begin by observing that most of them are pre-Christian, and can be illustrated from Philo. Some further precision may have accrued in later discussion; but in the main they belong to the inheritance, rather than to the evolution, of Christian orthodoxy. It hardly needs repeating that Philo takes over the Pythagorean teaching that a simple unity is the source of all reality; at *Heres* 190 he recalls the purely arithmetical doctrine that the monad is not a number (i.e. plurality) but the source of all number; at *Somn.* 2.70 he applies this doctrine to theology, so as to equate the monad with the Maker. It might seem otiose to maintain that the monad is unique; but the Pythagoreans exploited the verbal similarity of *monas/monos/monimos*, and Philo in turn observes that the monad is like God because of their singularity, monōsis (*Heres* 183, *Spec. leg.* 2.176). At *Somn.* 2.221 Philo speaks of the constancy of the ultimate source; at *De confusione linguarum* 180 he associates 'the eldest of things that are' with 'the most perfect good'; at *De praemiis et poenis* 40 'better

than the good' is coupled with 'older than the monad' cited above Finally the monad is absolute reality (*Immut* 11), and *De ebrietate* 45 refers to 'the one true God' In terms of our catchwords, therefore, the monad is *simplex*, *primus*, *unicus*, *constans*, *bonus*, *verus*

The source of these connections must be looked for in a region of ancient philosophy which remains obscure despite intensive discussion: the Pythagorean philosophy before the time of Plato, and the Pythagorean teaching which Plato adapted in his theory of ideal numbers, and above all in his enigmatic lecture on 'the One and the Good' We are not concerned at present with the question, how Plato thought the numbers are derived from the One;[19] nor with the connections of thought which Plato must have tried to establish between individual numbers and basic concepts (of which the traditional example is that four = justice, invoking the 'four-square' right-angle as the basis of exact division, of equality, and of stable constructions). Our main interest is the One itself; and I suggest that we can trace back to these early discussions two principles which came to form part of the Christian tradition. The first is that the One is the ultimate source of a multiplicity of Forms which provide the permanent structure of the universe and also the pattern of its values. These Forms themselves exhibit both unity and goodness, but in a lesser degree and a relative mode compared with their source; they are each of them a unity relative to their multiple instances, but they are distinct from each other as contrasted with its absolute unity; and they are each of them the source of goodness, or pattern of goodness, for some class of beings, 'a good so-and-so', rather than being the sole source of all goodness The second principle is that the One is the highest reality and absolute truth, since it holds the key to the Forms on which all true predication must be based; but it is a truth which is inconceivable and inexpressible, certainly to us men, and possibly to any being other than itself; the reason being that true statements were conceived on the model of a synthesis of two notions (and, for that matter, knowledge was seen as the identification of the mind with its object); but in neither case was pure and absolute unity achieved; a true statement could only be significant if two distinct notions were brought together (a theory opposed to the view put about by Antisthenes that the only unquestionably true statement was the unqualified identity 'X is X'); and the mind's 'identity' with its object could only be an identity of form, not a wholesale coalescence. It followed that the One had to be exhibited as, on the one hand, good, being the source of all goodness; but contrariwise as unknowable and

indefinable; not simply devoid of qualities (e.g. sense-qualities) but unconditioned by any attribute whatsoever, since any statement about it could not be true unless it was in formal correspondence with its object (i.e. simple) and could not be significant unless it were composite, attaching a predicate which was distinguishable from its subject.

Within the Platonic tradition, Plotinus made the most sustained and coherent effort to work out these principles, concluding *inter alia* that the ultimate source could not have knowledge even of itself, since even self-knowledge implied a distinction between the mind as Knower and the mind as Known; thus the traditional 'scale of being', ascending from inanimate nature to conscious minds and upwards through progressively purer and more penetrating intelligences, was apparently interrupted; not simply lost in the clouds of heavenly glory, but brought to a stand by the paradox of a Being who is the source of all goodness but cannot be good.[20] Christian thinkers, inheriting a richer though far more complex tradition, struck out new lines of thought which were never (I think) connected in a logically coherent whole, but which, if pursued, should have exhibited the notion of wholly undifferentiated divine simplicity as an unwanted survival.

Within the compass of this essay, there are only two critical principles which I have space to develop One of these might be labelled 'the diminishing returns of unification'; the other I take to be simply an application of a fairly recent movement in philosophy, namely the rejection of the picture theory of meaning.

However, no originality is claimed for the first principle either. It relates to a proposal made by Leonard Hodgson,[21] which perhaps never attracted as much attention as it deserved. Hodgson contrasted 'mathematical' with 'organic' unity, explaining that 'Approximation to the ideal of mathematical unity is measured by a scale of ... absence of multiplicity; but approximation to the ideal of organic unity is measured by a scale of intensity of unifying power' (p. 94) Hodgson considers the case of human character, in which a divided mind or a split personality is a grave disadvantage 'In the case of the human self, the unity is by no means always perfect . But in whatever measure it is achieved, this is not affected by the cancellation of factors until nothing is left but an undifferentiated unity . . far more intense is the unity manifested in a life which unifies a wider range . '

One might, alternatively, consider the role of unity in personal relationships, taking a single pair of friends to deputize for the more complex interrelations of a group or of our whole society Clearly there

must be some correspondence or similarity of interests, fortune or temperament if any personal relationship is to begin; and the process of growing together, of assimilating another's experience and imitating his judgments and values, can be exciting and rewarding. But the partnership needs refreshing by the maintenance of outside interests and the bringing in of fresh experience by each of the partners and ideally by a love shared by both partners but directed on to another person or cause; for however attractive initially the recognition of an *alter ego* provided by fortune, or the attempt to realize it as an ideal, the project is self-defeating: to make one personality an exact replica of the other is to reduce by one the number of distinct moral agents; and a mutually monopolizing partnership has no great advantage over a self-absorbed individual

Hodgson used his concept of unity to formulate a doctrine of the Trinity in social terms 'The true pattern of unity for men who are made in the image of God is one in which there is a place for all our different selves, so far as they are good selves, a unity in which each is to remain its own self in order that it may play its part in enriching the whole' (p. 185). I would not follow him at every point: the sentence just quoted could easily provoke the reply that there can be no analogy of this kind with a God who needs no enrichment, since he is himself the source of all good things. But the alternative seems to be that we treat the substance or inner being of the Godhead, characterized by mysterious and incomprehensible but absolute simplicity, as something totally unrelated to the Trinity of Persons in which we believe it is deployed. And I would think also that there is no escaping the conclusion drawn by Plotinus: an absolutely simple Godhead cannot understand or control the influence and attraction that he exerts.

My second point is that it is a mistake to think that a descriptive sentence can only be true if it is in a structural correspondence with the reality or state of affairs which it describes. Like so many philosophical theories, the picture theory of meaning is a Cinderella's glass coach so long as one is content to go along with it and accept it on its own terms, but collapses into dust and cobwebs when the spell is broken.[22] It seems beneath the dignity of a serious objection if one observes that, on such a theory, to state that there are four people in this room one would have to formulate a sentence embodying four identical symbols. And of course the theory can be developed so as to escape such simply conceived objections: we have to incorporate conventions in which 'four' replaces a symbolism of the form a, b, c, d, and 'in the room' is

a conventional equivalent for an ideal symbolism in which the symbols for the four people would be actually enclosed by the symbol for 'room'.

Theories of this kind, however, seem to have affected ancient discussions on the nature of God; it could be argued, for instance, that God cannot be known because he cannot be defined; he cannot be defined because that would involve assigning him to a genus within which he is distinguished by a differentia; and this would mean he consisted of two distinct elements, and was no longer simple.[23] The answer, reduced to its simplest terms, is that there is no reason to think that a correct description mirrors the structure of the thing described. If we describe man as a rational animal, we cannot point to the two elements named by this phrase; and if we tried to do so – perhaps by saying that he has an animal body *plus* a directing intelligence – we can only make this plausible by ignoring the relatedness of the two components. Man lives his animal life in a way prescribed by reason, but conversely the exercise of his reason is qualified and sometimes interrupted by his animal nature. Why not then ignore the attempt to conform him to his definition, refer to him as a psycho-physical unity and be done with it?

It is a mistake of this order which I take to be a peculiar weakness of the Cappadocian theology of the Trinity: the three Persons are defined as possessing the same simple undivided divine substance qualified by three distinguishing peculiarities. But this is not presented only as a way in which they may be conceived; the definitions are supposed to conform to their inner structure, so that the undivided Godhead which they share is not so much manifested in three personal beings or modes as contradicted by the imposed characteristics by which they are distinguished. On the other hand the Cappadocians most opportunely, though unexpectedly, insist that the simplicity of the Godhead does not preclude a multiplicity of descriptions, *epinoiai*. These, however, were thought to relate to the energies and relationships of the Godhead, leaving his simple substance unaffected; a position which I have given reason to reject.

To return, in conclusion, from the intricacies of exact theology to the burdens imposed on our mortality by faith in a transcendent spirit: the concept of divine simplicity should present a challenge to an over-simple faith. One cannot help feeling that there is some force in the sceptics' objection to 'God-bothering'; it is less easy for us than it was for an earlier generation to assert without misgivings that 'the eyes of the Lord

are over the righteous and his ears are open unto their ptayer'. If we claim that our prayers are heard and answered, does this mean that we expect God to give us his undivided attention? Not, surely, in the sense that we ask him to neglect all other petitioners Can we then imagine a mind whose capacities are so vast that it can respond to the individual needs of men whose numbers are multiplying beyond all imagination? The problem here is that this is more easily imagined if we note the capacity of our own minds to control many complex movements and activities without a conscious effort of attention; we might suppose that in some similar way God automatically distributes his bounty, 'making the sun to rise upon the evil and upon the good', or more personally and creatively, distributing to each man the help or correction that his condition requires. But this still does not suggest a God who stands in a caring relationship; and it may prove that the only way in which this can be upheld is by giving full weight to the doctrine that the Father exercises this condescending grace through his expression in the incarnate Christ made man for us. To suggest this puts the orthodoxy of Nicaea and Chalcedon under the severest strain; we wonder whether it can support the union of infinite, all-regarding majesty with the intimacy of a man-to-man relationship; so that the operations are undivided, the majesty unimpaired by an unlimited distribution, the intimacy preserved without distraction over a cosmic extension of concern This is a problem on which even the Arians, if given their due, might have something to teach us; and on which the evolution of orthodoxy might bring much-needed light

NOTES

1 Methodius, *De resurrectione* 2 10; Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* 11.13, 12.11; Constantine, *Ad sanctos* 7 1–2; Athanasius, *Contra gentes* 27 fin, 36–7; cf Severus in Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 13.17.2
2 Diels, *DG*, p 449, fr 5.
3 See *De anima* 1 5, 411b 1–19, 2 2, 413b 13ff , 28, cf 2 3 *init.*; *De iuventute* 1, 467b 17; *Ethica Eudemia* 2 1, 1219b 32
4 Posidonius, fr 142–6 Edelsrein
5 Diels, *DG*, Index, p 781b.
6 See J Leisegang's index (vol VII 2, Berlin 1936), 868b 869a, to L Cohn and P Wendland's edition of Philo.
7 Fr 32 = *SVF* 1.571
8 Fr 34, cf *SVF* 2.283.
9 *Tertullianus de anima*, Amsterdam 1947, p 215.
10 A.-M. Festugière, *La révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, vol 3, pp 194–5.

11 For which see *Quis rerum divinarum heres?* 232; *De opificio mundi* 117; *Legum allegoriae* 1 11; *Quod deterius potiori insidiari soleat* 168; *De agricultura* 30 etc
12 R T Wallis, *Neoplatonism*, London 1973, pp 34, 62
13 *SVF* 2.92, 633–5, 638, etc.
14 *SVF* 2.475, 534, 546, 1023, 1211 (= Posidonius fr 106); Philo, *migr* 178–80; Marcus Aurelius, 6.38
15 Philo, *Heres* 155, cf *Migr* 219–20
16 Cf W Pannenberg, in *Basic Questions in Theology*, vol 2, London 1971, pp 170–1
17 Irenaeus, *Haer* 2 13.3, see my *Divine Substance*, Oxford 1977, pp 187–9; Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p 167.
18 Diels, *DG* 281a 6–12, 302a 7–10.
19 For which consult, e g , W D Ross, *Plato's Theory of Ideas*, Oxford 1951, and the passages collected by C. J. de Vogel, *Greek Philosophy A Collection of Texts*, vol 1: *Thales to Plato*, Leiden 1950, under the heading 'The Ideal Numbers'
20 Plotinus himself did of course identify the first principle as 'the Good', as well as 'the One'.
21 *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, London 1943, pp 89ff , esp pp 94–5
22 I use the phrase rather loosely, without specific reference to Wittgenstein's theory, for which see G H R Parkinson, *The Theory of Meaning*, Oxford 1968, p 5
23 Cf Pannenberg, *Basic Questions*, p 132.

INDEX

Abramowski, Luise: fII 140; X 76
Adeodatus, son of Augustine: XVIII 63
64–5, 66, 67, 69
Adoptionism heresy: IV 30
Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*: XVII 3
Aetius: VI 154; XXI 262
Africanus: III 144, 145
Albinus: II 9; V 44; XVI 6
Alexander of Aphrodisias: III 144; V 47,
48; VII 675, 676, 678, 681, 683,
684; XXI 260
De Fato: V 49; VII 674
Alexander, Bishop of Alexandria: IV 24,
25, 26, 27, 30, 34, 36; V 41, 42,
46, 47, 50–51; VI 157; VIII 51,
56; X 76, 82, 85–6, 90
e philarchos, analysis: X 76–91
Alexander of Lycopolis: V 43, 44
Alexandria: I 177; III 146; XII 248
Ambrose: XV 73; XXI 255
analogy, doctrine of: II 12–13
Anatolius: V 39, 40
Antichrist: X 80
Antinous: IX 231
Antioch, Synod of: III 140; X 76
Antipodes: XVII 9
Apollinaris the Younger: XII 233, 234,
235; XIII 65, 69, 77
Apuleius: XV 73, 75; XVI 8
Aquinas: XX 319; XXI 255
arche: II 9–10
Archimedes: I 180; VII 680
Arianism: II 14; VIII 51–9
doctrine: X 83–5
see also Arius
Aristotle: II 18; VII 680; XIV 154, 156;
XV 84; XVI 3; XVIII 66;
XVIII (Add) 2; XX 319
Categories: XX 306, 313
on change: I 183
De Anima: XVIII 66; XXI 263, 268
De Generatione et Corruptione:
VII 673
De Interpretatione: XX 306, 313
De Iuventute: XXI 268
Ethica Eudemia: XXI 268
Ethica Nicomachea: XXI 262
on Forms: I 182
on knowledge: II 12
on language, theory of: XX 306
on light: XVII 6
on logic: I 177–8
Metaphysics: II 15; V 49; VII 673;
XXI 262
on names: XX 306–7
on participation: V 48
Physics: II 9
Poetics: XX 307
on simple bodies: XXI 257
on the soul: XVI 4; XXI 259–60
Topics: V 43, 313
on virtue: I 178–9
Arius: IV 34; XX 316
and the Logos doctrine: IV 25, 26,
28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 36; V 40–41,
45; VI 153–7; VII 671–84;
VIII 51–9; X 85, 88–90
in Athanasius' *De Decretis*: VI 154
Letter to Alexander: VII 676–7, 684
and Neoplatonism: V 39–51
sources on: IV 24–5
Thalia: IV 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 33;
V 41, 42, 45, 46; VI 153, 154;
VII 672, 675, 678, 681, 684;
X 82, 85, 86–7, 88–9, 90–91
theology: IV 26, 32–3; V 47, 51
see also Arianism
Arius Didymus: XXI 257
Armstrong, A.H.: I 185; XVI 9
Aspasius: III 144, 145
Asterius: IV 25, 29; VIII 53
astronomy, and Augustine: XVII 10–11
Athanasius: II 14; V 41, 43, 49; VI 157;
VII 671; XX 316; XXI 255
ad Epictetum: XII 233
as an exegete: XI 174–84
Arius, criticism of: IV 24, 25, 26–7,
28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 34; VI 153

156; VII 679, 681, 683, 684; X 90
Contra Gentes: IX 230 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240; X 91; XI 178, 179; XII 246, 248; XXI 257, 268
De Decretis: VI 154; XXI 257
De Incarnatione: IX 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 236, 237, 238; X 77–8; X 91; XI 179; XII 246, 248; XIII 71
De Synodis: IV 24, 27, 28; VII 677, 678; VIII 51; X 80, 91; XI 78
Epistula ad Marcellinum: X 78; XI 174, 179, 180; XII 241; XIII 72; analysis: XIII 65–9, 74
Epistulae Festales: XI 175, 178, 180, 182, 183, 184; XII 248
Expositio Fidei: XI 176
Expositiones in Psalmos: XI 174; XII 235, 236, 237, 246, 248; XIII 65; analysis: XIII 69–78
henos somatos, analysis: X 76–91
Historia Arianorum: X 80
In Illud Omnia: XI 175; XIII 74
on knowledge of God: IX 229–42
Orationes: XI 175, 179, 182
Plato's *Politikos* cited: XI 179
on the soul of Christ: XII 233–50
Tomus ad Antiochenos: XII 233, 247
Vita Antonii: X 80; XIII 71
Athanasius of Anazarba: VI 154
Athenagoras: II 8; XI 181
Atticus: II 8; V 50
Augustine: I 179; II 18; IX 231; XXI 255
Against the Academics: XV 72
on astronomy: XVII 10–11
on belief: XVIII 73
cave simile: XIX 339, 343
City of God: XV 75; XVI 13; XVII 9
Confessions: XV 74, 79; XIX 339, 340, 341, 342; XXI 258
on cosmology: XVII 1–13
De Interpretatione: XVIII(Add) 1
De Magistro, analysis: XVIII 63–73
De Trinitate: XIX 340, 341
on *Ecclesiasticus*: XVII 4, 5
on the firmament: XVII 11–12
on the four elements: XVII 9–10
on *Genesis*: XVII 4–6
on heaven: XVII 12–13
on human life: XV 80–81
on intellect: XVI 1
on the intelligible world: XVI 11–14
on knowledge: XVIII 73
on learning: XVIII 72–3
life: XV 71–2
on light: XVII 6–7, 8
Literal Commentary on Genesis: XVI 1, 13; XVII 2, 4; XIX 340
on the meaning of words: XVIII 66–72; XVIII (Add) 1–2
on memory: XIX 339–45
on the natural world: XV 74–5; XVI 6
on the nature of God: XVI 13–14
on nouns: XVIII 66–8
On Free Choice: XV 80
on permanence: XV 83–4
on the philosophy of being: XV 71–84
on the philosophy of language: XVIII 63–72
on Platonism: XV 72–3, 74; XVI 2–4, 11–14
on seminal reasons: XV 79
on signs: XVIII 66–70
Soliloquies: XVI 13
on speech: XVIII 64–5
on spirits: XV 80
on teaching: XVIII 72–3
Aurelian: III 147

Bardy, G.: III 140–41; IV 36; VI 153, 154; X 76, 91
Barnabas: XI 181
Barnes, T.D.: III 141; X 76
Basil: IV 28; XVI 6; XVII 3, 11; XX 318, 320; XXI 255
on light XVII 6
Basilides: II 10; VIII 56; XVI 6
Bauer, W.: V 48
Beryllus of Bostra: III 142, 148
Bienert, W.A.: VII 682
Blume, H.-D.: II 15; VII 677
Brennecke, H.C.: III 141; IV 35
Bultmann, R.K.: II 18
Burnyeat, M.F.: XVIII 63, 68, 70

Calcidius: XXI 260
Callias: V 48
Calvenus Taurus: XVI 5
Carneades: XV 72
Chadwick, H.: I 185; III 141; XIX 341; XXI 255
Chalcedon, Council of: I 185
Christian thought, Greek influence: I 175–85
Christianity and Platonism: II 2
Chrysippus: I 183; XX 307, 312; XXI 260
Chrysostom, John: XXI 255
Cicero: I 179; II 9
De Natura Deorum: XVI 8; XVII 5
Hortensius: XV 71
Lucullus: XIX 341
Tusculan Disputations: XIX 341
Cleanthes: XXI 260
Clement: II 11; III 147; V 43, 44; VII 671, 674; IX 232, 236; XI 181
Codex Alexandrinus: XIII 65
Cohn, L.: XXI 268
Colluthus: X 91
Constantine, Emperor IV 24; V 39; VII 684; X 90
Ad sanctos: XXI 268
Constantinople, Council of: XIV 150
Coquin, R.G.: XI 175, 180, 183
Cosmas Indicopleustes, *Christian Topography*: XVII 9
Cosmology, and Augustine: XVII 1–13
Courcelle, P.: XIX 341
Cross, F.L.: XII 250
Cyprian: I 176
Cyril of Alexandria: XIII 65, 77; XXI 255

Decartes, R.: XV 72
demiourgos: I 181
Didymus: XIII 65, 77
Dinsen, F.: V 49
Diogenes of Babylon: XX 307
Diogenes Laertius: II 9; III 144, 146, 147; XX 310
Dionysius of Alexandria: IV 34; VII 683, 684; X 88
Dionysius the Areopagite: XVI 8
Dionysius of Rome: VII 683; XIII 74
Domnus, Bishop: IV 35
Dorival, G.: XIII 65, 75, 77
Dorner, I.A.: XII 249
Dörrie, H.: II 9, 15; VII 677
Dyad, The: V 45–6

Ecclesiasticus, and Augustine: XVII 5
Elipandus: IV 30
Empedocles: VII 672
Epicurus: XVII 2–3
epinoia: XX 309–10, 311–12, 315, 316, 318; XXI 267
Epiphanius: XI 184; XVII 7
Ettlinger, G.H.: XII 249
Euclid, and geometry: I 180
Eudorus: II 9
Eunomius, Bishop: IV 28; XX, 309, 314, 316
on names: XX 318–19
Eusebius of Caesarea: II 8; III 140–50; IV 29; V 43, 45, 49; VI 157; VII 674, 683; VIII 53; IX 236; X 81; XII 239, 241, 242, 243, 244, 246, 248; XIII 65, 73, 77, 78; XIX 341; XX 316
Commentaria: XII 247; XIII 74
Demonstratio Evangelica: XII 247, 248; XIII 74; XXI 258–9
Ecclesiastical Theology: XXI 259
Eclogae Propheticae: XII 247
on knowledge of God: IX 229–42
Laus Constantini: XI 231, 237; XII 247; XXI 268
Praeparatio Evangelica: V 39; IX 231, 238, 240; XXI 260, 268
on the soul of Christ: X 234
Theophaneia: XII 247, 248
Eusebius of Nicomedia, *Letter to Paulinus*: VII 671, 677, 682
Eustathius of Antioch: III 149; IV 33, 35, 36; XII 234
On the Soul of Christ: XII 247
exegesis, examples: XI 181–4
principles: XI 177–81
existentia/existentialitas: XVI 10–11

Feltoe, C.L.: VII 683
Festugière, A.-M.: V 45; XXI 268
firmament, the, and Augustine: XVII 11–12
Forms, Platonic: I 181–2; V 47; IX 240; XIV 158, 159, 160; XV 79; XVI 3–4; XX 305; XXI 264
Frend, W.H.C.: III 141

Galen: XXI 260
Galtier, P.: XII 249
Genesis, and Augustine: XVII 4–6
geometry, and Euclid: I 180
George of Laodicea: VII 676
Gnosticism: II 5; VIII 56; XX 319
God, immutability: II 14–15
knowledge of: IX 229–42; XXI 267
as mind: II 6; IX 239–40; XXI 268
naming of: XX 314–15
nature of: XVI 11, 13–14
view of prophets: II 7
goodness: XXI 263
Greeks, The, and Christian thought: I 175–85
and mathematics: I 179–80

and monotheism: II 6, 17
Gregg, R C : IV 25, 26, 28; VI 153; VII 671, 675
Gregory of Nyssa: IX 242; XX 310, 320; XXI 255, 261
Ad Eustathium de sancte trinitate: XIV 149–50
Ad Graecos: XIV 149
on the Trinity doctrine: XIV 149–63
Gregory Thaumaturgus: IX 236
Grillmeier, A.: III 141; XII 234, 249
Groh, D : IV 25, 26; VI 154; VII 675

Hadot, P : XVI 2
Hadrian, Emperor: IX 231
Hall, S G : VI 154
Hanson, R P C.: III 141; VII 671
Harnack, Adolf von: II 1, 2, 18
Hatch, E : I 185
Heaven, and Augustine: XVII 12–13
Hephaestus: I 176–7
Hera: I 176–7
Heraclides: III 142, 148
Heraclitus, on change: I 181, 183
Hermogenes: VII 679
Herschel, W : XVII 10
Hilary, Pope: XI 181
Hippolytus : III 144, 145; XVI 6; XXI 257
Refutatio omnium haeresium: XXI 262
Hodgson, Leonard: XXI 265–6
Homer: I 176, 177
Hübner, R : VII 671; XIV 150
hypostasis, meaning: I 183
and the Trinity: I 183–5

Iamblichus: V 39, 40, 44, 51; XXI 260
On the Mysteries of Egypt: V 50
Theologoumena Arithmeticae: V 46
immutability: II 14–15
Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*: II 8, 11, 16; III 144, 145; VII 671; IX 232, 238; XI 181; XXI 269

Jaeger, W : I 185; II 4
Jerome: I 176; III 143, 144, 146, 147
Jews, The, and monotheism: II 6
John, St : I 181
Josephus, *Contra Apionem*: XI 176
Justin Martyr, St.: II 4, 8, 11; XX 319
Dialogus: XXI 260

Kannengiesser, C : IV 27, 28, 29; VI 153; VII 675, 684; IX 235; X 78; XI 177
Kelly, J N D : III 141; X 76; XIV 157–8
Kettler, F.-H : VI 155, 157
Kirwan, C A : XVIII 63
Klostermann, E : III 147; VI 156
knowledge, theory of: II 12
Knowles, D.: XVI 13
Kohnke, F W : XVI 9
Krämer, H J : XVI 2

Lactantius: II 9; XVII 9
language, philosophy of, and Augustine: XVIII 63–72
Lefort, Lh : XI 175, 178
Leisegang, J : XXI 268
Lietzmann, H : X 76
light, and Aristotle XVII 6
and Augustine: XVII 6–7, 8
and Basil: XVII 6
Hebrew notion of: XVII 6, 8
nature of: XVII 3
and Plato: XVII 7
and the Stoics: XVII 7
Livingstone, R.: I 185
Lloyd, A C.: XV 73
logic, and Aristotle: I 177–8
Logos, The, and Arianism: IV 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 36; V 40–41, 45; VI 153–7; VII 671–84; VIII 51–9; X 85, 88–9
and Marcellus: VI 157; XII 234
and Origen: XX 315
and Paul of Samosata: IV 34; X 85; XII 234, 249
and the soul of Christ: XII 234, 244
Loofs, F.: II 2; III 141
Lorenz, R.: III 141; IV 25, 26, 27, 29–30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36; VI 154–5; VII 671, 672, 676, 677; X 76, 82, 83–9
Louth, A.: IX 230, 231, 232
Lucan: V 47
Lucas, L: XV 83
Lucchesi, E : IV 28; XI 175
Lucian of Antioch: IV 34, 35, 36; VII 683
Luther: II 11, 18

Malchion: III 141
Manichaeism: V 44; VII 684
Manichaeus: VII 677
Manichees: XV 71–2; XVII 3
Mann, F : II 15; VII 677
Marcellus : III 149; IV 29; VII 675; X 91; XII 249; XIII 74

and the Logos doctrine: VI 157; XII 234
Marcus Aurelius: XVII 7; XXI 269
Margerie, B. de: XI 177
Markus, R.A.: I 185
Martin, A : IV 24
Mathematics, and the Greeks: I 179–80
Maximus of Tyre: XVI 6
Melissus: II 9
memory, and Augustine: XIX 339–45
Merendino, P : XI 175
Mesopotamia: XVII 4
Methodius: VII 671; XIX 341
De resurrectione: XXI 268
Meyendorff, J.: XV 78; XVI 12
Moderatus: V 44
Möhler, J A : X 76
Monad, The: V 45–6
monotheism, and the Greeks: II 6, 17
and the Jews: II, 6
Müller, F.: XIV 149
Müller, G: X 78

names, application to God: XX 314–15, 317–20
and Aristotle: XX 306–7
and Eunomius: XX 318–19
meaning: XX 316–17
and Philo of Alexandria: XX 313–15, 319
and Socrates: XX 303–5
and the Stoics: XX 307, 309
Nazianzen, G., and simple bodies: XXI 256–7
Nebridius: XV 81
Neoplatonism, and Arius: V 39–51
Nestorius: III 140
Newman, J H : X 76, 80, 81
Nicaea, Council of: I 184; IV 24
nomos: XX 303
Norris, F W : III 141
Nouns, and Augustine: XVIII 66–8
nous: IX 233, 234, 235
numbers, nature of: I 180; XXI 262
Plato's theory of: XXI 264–5
Numenius: V 44, 45

Oort, J. van: VII 684
Orbe, A : XX 309
Origen: II 18; III 142, 145, 146, 147, 148; IV 25; V 45, 50; VI 157; VII 672, 679, 682; IX 232–3, 238, 242; X 81; XI 179, 181; XIII 65, 70, 77; XVII 6; XX 315, 316
Against Celsus: I 177; III 144
Commentary on John: VI 155, 156
De Principiis: I 177; IV 32; V 44; VII 671; IX 239, 240; XI 182; XVI 6; XXI 258; XXI 260
on knowledge of God: IX 239
on the Logos: XX 315
on the soul of Christ: IV 26, 28, 30, 31–2, 33; XII 233–4, 245
Ossius of Cordoba, Bishop: X 77
ousia: I 182, 183, 184; V 40, 46, 47, 49; XIV 149, 150, 155, 157; XX 311

Pannenberg, W : II 1–18; XXI 269
Parkinson, G H R : XXI 269
Parmenides: I 181, 182; II 9; VII 672
Paul, St : I 178; IX 231, 236; XVII 12; XVIII 67
and the Stoics: I 179
Paul of Samosata : III 140, 143, 147–8, 149, 150; IV 26, 30, 34, 35, 36; V 49; VII 683; VIII, 53
and the Logos doctrine: IV 34; X 85; XII 234, 249
Pease, A.S.: XVI 8
Peel, M L : XVII 7
Pépin, J : XVI 2
Peter of Alexandria, Bishop: IV 33; XIII 76
Peter, St : XVII 13
Pettersen, A : XII 249
Philo of Alexandria: I 177; II 7–8, 9; V 44, 45; VI 156; IX 230, 232, 234, 236, 240, 241, 242; XII 248; XIV 159; XVI 6; XVII 4, 5; XXI 257, 262
De agricultura: XXI 269
De confusione linguarum: XXI 263
De ebrietate: XXI 264
De gigantibus: XXI 260, 262
De mutatione nominum: XXI 260
De opificio mundi: XXI 262, 269
De posteritate Caini: XXI 260
De praemiis et poenis: XXI 262, 263–4
De Somniis: XXI 260
De specialibus legibus: XXI 262
on *epinoia*: XX 311–12
Heres: XXI 263, 269
Legum allegoriae: XXI 262, 269
on names: XX 313–15, 319
Quis rerum divinarum heres?: XXI 269
Quod deterius potiori indidiari soleat: XXI 269

on simple bodies: XXI 259–60
on the theory of Ideas: XVI 5
phusis: XV 75; XX 303
Plantinga, C.: XIV 158
Plato: I 176; II 18
Cratylus: XVIII 71; XX 303, 304, 305, 307, 313
Euthydemus: XVIII (Add) 2
First Alcibiades: IX 237
on Forms: I 181–2; V 47; IX 240; XIV 158, 159, 160; XV 79; XVI 3–4; XX 305; XXI 264
on God as mind: II 6
on ideal numbers, theory of: XXI 264–5
on Ideas, theory of: XV 75, 76–8; XVI 2–3, 4–5
on immutability: II 14–15
on intellect: I 178
on justice: XV 76
on knowledge: II 12
on light: XVII 7
Meno: XVIII(Add) 2; XIX 340, 341–2, 345
on numbers: XXI 264–5
Parmenides: V 44, 45
Phaedo: I 176; IX 234; XXI 259
Philebus: XVI 6
Politicus: XVI 6
Republic: I 176; II 12, 14; IX 233, 236, 238; XIX 342; XXI 259, 263
Sophist: XVI 3, 6, 8; XVIII (Add) I
on the soul: I 178, 179; XVI 2; XXI 259
Symposium: I 178; XIX 345
Theaetetus: XIX 342
Timaeus: I 180–181; II 8, 16; V 50; IX 238; XV 73, 74, 77; XVI 2, 4; XVII 5, 7
vision, theory of: IX 238–9
Platonism, and Augustine: XV 72–3, 74; XVI 2–4, 11–14
and Christianity: II 2
Plotinus, *Enneads*: II 4; V 39, 40, 46, 47, 49, 50, 51; IX 238, 239; XV 72, 73, 77, 78; XVI 3, 5–6, 11, 12; XXI 265, 266, 269
Plutarch: III 144, 145, 146, 147; V 50; VII 674, 679; XX 312
Platonic Questions: VII 671
pneuma: XXI 258
Pollard, T E.: XI 177, 178, 180
Porphyry: V 39, 43, 44, 48, 50, 51; XV 72, 73; XVIII (Add) 2; XXI 260
De Abstinentia: V 43
Isagoge: V 40, 41, 42, 47, 49
Tree of: XVI 6, 8, 9; illustration: XVI 7
Posidonius: IX 238; XX 311; XXI 260, 268, 269
Proclus: V 45
prophets, view of God: II 7
Psalter: XIII 66–78
Pythagoras: VII 680
Pythagoreans: II 9
and simple bodies: XXI 262–4

Ramos-Lisson, D.: V 39
Richard, M.: III 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150; IV 35; XII 234, 249
Riedmatten, Henri de: III 140, 141, 150; IV 35; XII 234, 247, 249
Rist, J.: XVI 2; XVIII (Add) 1
Ritschl, A.: II 2
Ritter, A M.: II 2
Robertson, A.: VII 675; XI 175; X 76, 81
Rondeau, M.-J.: XII 246, 250; XIII 65, 71, 75, 76
Ross, W D.: V 45; XXI 269
Rouet de Journel, M.J.: XXI 255
Rufinus: III 143, 146, 147; IV 32; IX 239
Russell, B.: I 180

Sabellius: III 149
Saffrey, H D.: IV 28
Sample, R L.: III 141
scala naturae: XVI 6, 8, 9
illustration: XVI 7
Schwartz, E.: X 76
Selle, E. te: XIX 340
Seneca: XVI 6; XX 308
Severus: XXI 260
Sextus Empiricus: III 144, 145; XX 310
Sieben, H J.: XI 177, 178; XIII 66; XXI 256
signs, and Augustine: XVIII 66–70
Simonetti, M.: III 141, 142, 143, 146, 150; IV 35; VII 683; X 76
simple bodies, and Aristotle: XXI 257
and Gregory Nazianzen: XXI 256–7
and Philo: XXI 259–60
and the Pythagoreans: XXI 262–4
and Tertullian: XXI 258–9
Simplicius: VII 672
Socrates: I 182; V 39, 48; IX 237; X 81; XVIII (Add) 2; XIX 341; XX 307
on names: XX 303–5
Solomon: I 180
Sophocles: XVII 3
Sorabji, R.: II 9
soul: XXI 260
and Aristotle: XVI 4; XXI 259–60;
of Christ: and Athanasius: XII 233–50; and Eusebius: X 234; and the Logos: XII 234, 244; in the New Testament: XII 235
and mind: IX 234–5
as mirror: IX 236–7
and Plato: I 178, 179; XVI 2; XXI 259
purity: IX 235–6
and the Stoics: XXI 261
Sozomen: V 39
Speusippus: XVI 4
Stead, G C.: VII 671, 675, 677; XI 174; XXI 262
Stoics, and light: XVII 7
and names: XX 307, 309
and 'propositions': XX 307–9
and St Paul: I 179
and the soul: XXI 261
Stupperich, R.: VI 155

Tatian, *Ad Graecos*: XXI 260
Taylor, J H.: XVII 1
Tertullian: I 176, 183; II 4; VII 671, 675, 679; X 90; XI 181; XVII 3; XXI 255; XXI 257
on simple bodies: XXI 258–9
Thagaste: XV 71; XVIII 63
Theodore of Mopsuestia: XIII 70
Theognostus: VII 671
Theophilus: XI 236
Ad Autolycum: XXI 260
Theophrastus: V 45
Thomson, R.W.: XII 250
Torrance, I F.: II 2
Trinity, The, doctrine of: I 183–5; XIV 149–63; XXI 266, 267

Urbina, I Ortiz de: XII 249

Valentinus: VII 674–5, 677
Verbeke, G.: VII 671, 672
Vian, G M.: XI 174; XII 237, 238, 239, 243; XIII 65, 70, 73, 77
Victorinus, Marius: XV 73
Ad Candidum: XVI 9
on the intelligible world: XVI 9–11, 13
on the nature of God: XVI 11
vision, theory of: IX 238–9
Vogel, C.J. de: II 2, 9; XXI 269
Voisin, G.: XII 249

Wallis, R I.: XXI 269
Walzer, R.: II 8
Waszink, J H.: XXI 260
Wendland, P.: XXI 268
West, M L.: IV 27; VI 153
Wickert, U.: VII 684
Williams, R D.: III 141; VII 682; X 91
thesis on Arius and Neoplatonism: V 39–51
Wittgenstein, L.: XXI 269

Xenocrates: XV 77; XVI 4
Xenophanes: II 5, 8, 16
Xenophon: III 147

Zeno: I 183; III 146
Zeus: I 176–7